

# DANTE STUDIES

with the Annual Report  
of the Dante Society



CXXII

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2004

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# Dante, *Purgatorio* 2, and the Jubilee of Boniface VIII

JO ANN H. MORAN CRUZ

This paper situates Dante's *Divine Comedy* within the very specific context of the Jubilee of 1300. It argues that Dante was concerned with the authority that Pope Boniface VIII had assumed through the three plenary indulgences he issued that year. While Dante's path to salvation is strewn with images and examples that offer a polemic regarding the extent of papal authority in the afterlife, this essay focuses especially on that polemic as it unfolds in Canto 2 of *Purgatorio*.<sup>1</sup>

On Holy Thursday, April 7, 1300, Pope Boniface VIII appeared on the newly rebuilt balcony of St. John Lateran in Rome to bless townspeople and pilgrims arriving for the Jubilee of that year—the dramatic first Jubilee in what would be a long tradition of Roman Jubilees. He reiterated the terms of a plenary indulgence, entitled “*Antiquorum habet fida*,” which he had first promulgated on February 22, 1300 and had made retroactive to December 25, 1299, viz., that all those making a pilgrimage to Rome during the Jubilee Year (from December 25, 1299 to December 25, 1300), and visiting the stations of the two basilicas of Saints Peter and Paul for at least thirty days for Romans and fifteen days for foreigners, would receive “not merely a full and most abundant but the fullest forgiveness of all their sins,” provided that they are or will be contrite and confessed.<sup>2</sup> He also proclaimed, for the day of Holy Thursday only, an abbreviation of the time required to obtain the plenary indulgence,<sup>3</sup> and he read publicly, for perhaps the first time, a second papal bull announcing the Jubilee, likewise dated February 22, 1300. A fresco, traditionally attributed to Giotto, is said to record the events of this Holy Thursday.<sup>4</sup> In the surviving

fragment of that fresco, a figure to the left of Boniface is holding this second papal bull, which is entitled “Nuper per alias.”<sup>5</sup> The first bull, “Antiquorum habet fida,” is reasonably well-known. The second bull is less often remarked upon, although its presence in Giotto’s fresco likely underlines its importance for Boniface.

“Nuper per alias,” while reminding the audience of the remissions and indulgences conceded by Boniface for the Jubilee and repeating some of the provisions already stated in “Antiquorum habet fida,” excludes certain persons and classes of persons from the benefits of the Jubilee indulgence. False and impious Christians who carry prohibited goods to the Saracens are excluded. Also excluded are King Frederick of Sicily, members of the Colonna family damned by the papacy, those who support the Colonna, and, generally, all and every public enemy, any rebel or impugner of the Church, present as well as future, as well as those who have knowledge of such or who give them aid, advice or favor (either public or secret).<sup>6</sup> The terms of this bull, which would have excluded King Philip IV of France as a supporter of the Colonna, would, by late 1301 if not before, also have excluded Dante as both a supporter of the White Guelphs of Florence and an enemy of Boniface.<sup>7</sup> As an exile and an enemy of the Church, Dante would no longer share in the spiritual benefits offered at the Jubilee. This exclusion may have had special, perhaps ironic, significance if, as Peter Armour suggests, Dante’s journey to Rome in 1300 was a spiritual turning point in his life.<sup>8</sup> This paper argues that Dante’s conception of the afterlife in his *Commedia* incorporates a polemic with a papacy that was dramatically expanding the scope of papal indulgences—a polemic that was tied, very much, to Boniface VIII’s Jubilee indulgences of 1300.

There is a provocative coincidence in the timing of Boniface’s Holy Thursday public proclamation of “Nuper per alias” and the composition of Dante’s *Commedia*. It was also on Holy Thursday in 1300 that Dante was to portray himself, at the very beginning of his work, as lost in a dark wood. The next morning, in his effort to climb the mountain<sup>9</sup> at the beginning of his *Commedia*, Dante is stopped by a greedy wolf representing, most agree, papal Rome. Many commentators have noted the symbolism relating to Dante’s political enmity with Rome and with Pope Boniface, but few have remarked that Dante, excluded from the plenary indulgence of 1300 and, therefore, metaphorically perhaps, in a juridical and penitential darkness, may have been at odds with Boniface over the

state of his own soul. In the *Commedia* Dante finds that he must take another path to salvation, one that, throughout the poem, does not depend upon the papacy or the institutional Church. Dante was to find his salvation with the help of Heaven, guided by the figure of Virgil, poet of imperial Rome—an imperial Rome that did not recognize the temporal and imperial pretensions of Pope Boniface.<sup>10</sup>

In the course of following that other path, Dante is concerned to contest papal claims to absolve souls of their punishments in the afterlife or to legislate the exclusion or inclusion of individuals in Hell, Purgatory or Heaven. Thus, very quickly Dante problematizes the efficacy of papal canonizations by placing Pope Celestine V, canonized as a saint in 1313, within the gates of Hell (if technically not among the damned). Counterbalancing this is Dante's placement of Manfred, an illegitimate son of the Emperor Frederick II, in *Purgatorio*, despite dying excommunicate and anathematized ("we declare [him] condemned to the eternal fire with Satan and his angels").<sup>11</sup> In *Inferno* 27 Dante encounters Guido da Montefeltro in the eighth circle of Hell, despite the fact that Guido received an absolution for his future sin from Pope Boniface. According to the account Dante wishes his reader to accept, Guido's predicament is due in part to his lack of contrition and his overconfidence in Boniface's power of the keys to determine the afterlife: "Finor t'assolvo . . . / Lo ciel poss'io serrare e diserrare, / come tu sai . . . son due le chiavi" (*Inf.* 27.101–104). But the black cherub who drags Guido's soul into Hell reminds him "ch'assolver non si può chi non si pente, / né pentere e volere insieme puossi / per la contradizion che nol consente" (27.118–120). Dante further presses the point in his *Monarchia*, where he states that the power of the keys does not empower the pope to absolve the impenitent, whom even God cannot absolve.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, while the Church damned the upbaptized, Dante encounters the pagan Cato at the entrance of Purgatory and another pagan, Ripheus, in Paradise. Virgil's position, as a pagan, raises all manner of questions that cannot be accounted for in the orthodox theology of the afterlife. Direct, divine intervention allows Virgil to accompany Dante through Hell and Purgatory. Beatrice's prayers on behalf of Virgil (for what purpose?), Virgil's role in the salvation of others, Virgil's own learning as he advances, as well as his increasing physical lightness in Purgatory, all raise the possibility of his salvation.<sup>13</sup> Virgil's power even extends to his ability to extract a soul from the deepest level of Hell. Whereas Christ

descended into Limbo to rescue souls from Hell and bring them to salvation (*Inf.* 4.46–63), the pagan Virgil, at the behest of Erichtho, entered Judecca, the deepest circle of Hell, to draw forth a spirit (*Inf.* 9.23ff).<sup>14</sup> Finally, Dante also gives legitimacy to the story that the prayers of Pope Gregory I brought about the release of the emperor Trajan from Hell (*Purg.* 10.73–75);<sup>15</sup> Dante finds Trajan's soul in Heaven (*Par.* 20.43–48). Boniface, however, according to Dante, has no power to save himself, and he, along with other sinful popes, are among the most rooted souls in Hell, stuck in pits, upside down and sinking (*Inf.* 19).

As Dante moves into Purgatory, he considers the issue of the extent to which the actions of the living can influence the penitent in Purgatory. According to Dante, the living can sometimes quicken through prayer the advancement of souls undergoing the process of purgation. The belief that the living can influence the status of the dead has a history that predates the developed notion of Purgatory. As Jacques Le Goff points out in *The Birth of Purgatory*, the idea of the efficacy of “suffrages” or intercessory prayers for the dead, can be found from at least the third century forward.<sup>16</sup> In his letter on “De cura pro mortuis gerenda,” written in 421, Augustine argues that prayers and alms on behalf of the dead offer aid to those who deserve it.<sup>17</sup> A late eleventh-century instance appears in the autobiography of Guibert of Nogent, whose mother, through daily masses, alms, prayers and tears, strove to free her husband from purgatorial pains.<sup>18</sup> By the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas argued that “suffrages were useful to souls in Purgatory and even specially intended for them . . . . The accumulation of many suffrages, moreover, can even wipe out purgatorial punishment.”<sup>19</sup> The provisions for the Jubilee of 1300 included different conditions for the clergy, who, in order to receive the plenary indulgence, had to visit the requisite stations for only 15 or 10 days (as opposed to 30 or 15) as long as they commuted the remainder of the time to celebrating masses or to intercessory prayers for the dead.<sup>20</sup> Without exception, however, the souls in Dante's *Purgatorio* look to the prayers of pious laymen and women rather than to the offices of the Church—an odd circumstance given Boniface's incentive for clergy to offer masses and to pray for the souls of the dead during the Jubilee year.

Throughout *Purgatorio*, Dante raises the question of the relation between penance, intercessory powers and the workings of heavenly justice. Dante strikes the theme from the outset. In Canto 1 Dante invokes the Muses, and particularly Calliope and the sound of her song, “. . . con quel

suono / di cui le Piche misere sentiro / lo colpo tal, che disperar perdono” (*Purg.* 1.10–12). The Picae were turned into magpies after they unwisely challenged the Muses to a singing contest and unwisely sang in favor of the giants who had rebelled against the gods. Whether Dante means to look back and draw a parallel between their despair and his own in *Inferno* 1, or whether Dante intends, projecting forward, to warn readers that his own song will rise with Calliope to smite some who may despair of pardon, his resurrection of poetry in *Purgatorio* signals its immediate concern with penance and pardon.

In *Purgatorio* 1, as Dante and Virgil emerge from the underground, Cato accosts them with a question: “son le leggi d’abisso così rotte? / o è mutato in ciel nuovo consiglio, / che, dannati, venite alle mie grotte?” (46–48) Cato’s question and Virgil’s response make it evident that no souls (other than Dante and Virgil whose privilege comes from highest heaven) have emerged from Hell. Nor, apparently, have there been any new decrees that have so altered God’s justice as to allow souls to emerge from Hell. Thus, if any hell-bent souls who visited Rome in the Jubilee year imagined that they would somehow be saved by Boniface’s Jubilee indulgence, they would clearly have been wrong.<sup>21</sup>

Canto 1 also raises the issue of whether Marcia’s love, or any of her requests, could move Cato as they had done in life. Cato’s response is clear: “Or che di là dal mal fiume [Ancheron] dimora, / più muover non mi può, per quella legge / che fatta fu quando me n’usci’ fora” (88–90). Similarly, Dante, writing in the years after Boniface’s death, may have wanted to make the point that Boniface, whom Dante places in Hell, no longer had the power to affect any soul’s journey through the afterlife. For Dante’s own privileged ascent to Purgatory and Paradise was accomplished, literarily, in spite of Boniface’s Jubilee papal bulls with their wide-ranging indulgences and selective exclusions.

There is one instance, however, that appears to go against the grain of Dante’s attacks on papal claims of efficacy in the afterlife. In the scene where Dante questions his friend Casella about his tardy arrival in Purgatory (apparently some time after his actual death),<sup>22</sup> Casella responds that “Nessun m’è fatto oltraggio, / se quei che leva quando e cui li piace, / più volte m’ha negato esto passaggio; / . . . / veramente da tre mesi elli ha tolto / chi ha voluto intrar, con tutta pace” (*Purg.* 2.94–96, 98–99). Most commentators agree that Casella is referring to “Antiquorum habet fida,” which, having been made retroactive to December 25, 1299,



would have applied to Casella even if he had died before February 22 (and after December 25, 1299).<sup>23</sup> John Sinclair notes: "That Dante should attach such spiritual authority to the act of such a man as Pope Boniface, as he is known to us in the *Inferno*, is a singular evidence of the place held by the Church and the Papacy in his mind."<sup>24</sup> Sinclair is not alone in this conclusion. Most commentators agree that Dante was acknowledging the efficacy of Boniface's authority over Casella's soul.<sup>25</sup> This paper argues, however, that Casella's arrival, far from confirming papal power in the afterlife, is one more instance of Dante taking issue with Boniface's power to influence the path to salvation of any soul. To this end, we shall examine Dante's treatment of Canto 2 in light of popular expectations, papal claims, and theological debates over indulgences, penance, and the power of the keys in the afterlife.

As Dante and Virgil walk along the desert shores of the purgatorial mountain, they suddenly become aware of an approaching boat piloted by an angel and laden with spirits who are singing "In exitu Israel de Aegypto" and the rest of Psalm 113 (114). This hymn expresses thanksgiving for delivery from the bondage of Egypt, which is appropriate for Passover and for Easter (the time of Dante's arrival in Purgatory) as well as for the last offices for the dying and the burial of the dead. Upon landing in Purgatory, the spirits fling themselves on the beach ("ond'ei si gittar tutti in su la spiaggia," 2.52–3) and ask Dante and Virgil the way up the mountain.

Sixty lines into the canto Dante has already provided several provocative ideas. First, the pilgrims embark on a ship. It is possible that pilgrims to Rome in 1300, at the entrance to St. Peter's basilica, would have seen Giotto's mosaic of a ship carrying the apostles to Christ and salvation.<sup>26</sup> It shows St. Peter first as fisherman on the shores outside St. Peter's in Rome, and then at the head of a ship whose sails are directed by an angel blowing wind from the heavens; it concludes with Peter being drawn up onto the shore of Paradise by Christ. Giotto's mosaic was the product of a papal initiative, of which the Jubilee was a part, to privilege St. Peter and the Roman Church as the sole vehicle for salvation, suggesting that the ship of Peter (i.e., the Church) is the sole mediator between man and Christ, and that Christ is only attainable through the mediation of St. Peter.<sup>27</sup>

Giotto's fresco reveals similarities with Dante's ship. It embarks from the shore outside Rome, but in Dante's text the position of pilot is taken

by an angel rather than by St. Peter. And at the shore across the waters, the pilgrims are greeted, not by Christ, as in Giotto's work, but by Dante and Virgil. There may be some humor here, with the parallel between Dante and Christ that Dante established in the *Inferno* being once again brought into play.

Despite the fact that Dante's pilgrims find themselves deprived of St. Peter as their pilot, their actions suggest that they nonetheless expect to enter the promised land. They have begun their journey on the shores of the Tiber exactly where boats regularly embarked for the Holy Land. The experience of the pilgrim souls, traveling across the sea singing, would have reinforced the idea that they were bound for Paradise. Heavenly representations at the time included images of crossing over waters to Paradise; pilgrims to Rome in 1300 would have seen such representations of Heaven, for example, at the churches of San Clemente and Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, Dante's pilgrims might have been further inclined to interpret their journey as one to Paradise if they were familiar with St. Paul's *Apocalypse*, perhaps the most popular vision of the afterlife in the Middle Ages (and the only one to which Dante makes direct reference in the *Commedia*). In this vision, allegedly found in Paul's house in Tarsus in 388,<sup>29</sup> the gate of heaven is on the firmament, access to which is over the ocean that surrounds the whole earth. On this firmament lies the City of Christ, over Lake Acherusa: "He [the angel] stood by Lake Acherusa and set me in a golden ship. Angels, three thousand it seemed, sang a hymn before me until I [i.e., we] came to the City of Christ."<sup>30</sup> All these images echo the angel ship racing across ocean waters in *Purgatorio* 2, although in this instance it is the souls who are singing rather than the angels.

Medieval visions of Heaven commonly included the sweet sound of song and particularly those from the book of Psalms.<sup>31</sup> The song sung by the shipload of souls in Dante's poem, Psalm 113 (114), makes it explicit that they expected to land in Israel (the promised land) and in the presence of the God of Jacob.<sup>32</sup>

It was also traditional<sup>33</sup> for souls to be met by two individuals as they entered Paradise. At the church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome, those two individuals were SS Peter and Paul. At Santa Maria Maggiore, above the tomb of the bishop of Albano, which was completed on the eve of the Jubilee, the two individuals were Matthew and Jerome. On the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, the two individuals were Elijah and Enoch. Dante, by representing himself and Virgil as welcoming the souls

newly arrived from the Roman port of Ostia, may be providing a parody of such representations, and the souls, presumably expecting to be met by Christ, St. Peter, or other biblical figures, must have been surprised to find Dante and Virgil there.

But their surprise goes deeper than this. For Dante has drawn an extensive parallel between earthly pilgrims reaching the Holy Land and souls reaching Paradise. As we well know, the theme of Exodus within the text is so polysemous that its various possible meanings are nearly inexhaustible.<sup>34</sup> Dante, as author, knows that these souls will experience a toilsome interim climbing the purgatorial mountain, prefigured by the journey of the Israelites through the Sinai, before they enter Paradise. Yet, the pilgrims do not seem to realize this. Their actions are those of individuals who have already arrived at the Promised Land. Upon disembarking they rush onto the shore, throwing themselves on the ground just as pilgrims arriving by ship to the shores of the Holy Land were wont to do.<sup>35</sup> Upon meeting Dante, one of the souls, Casella,<sup>36</sup> embraces him. The theme of embracing friends and family upon entering Paradise is an old one that reaches back to Cicero and Virgil and was reiterated in a Christian context by Ambrose<sup>37</sup> and by later images of the chaste embracing.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, Casella's embrace prefigures the entrance to Heaven. The imagery attendant on their journey, and their own actions, all suggest that these pilgrims believe they are entering Paradise.

Nor do Dante and Virgil say anything that would have disabused them of that notion. Indeed, Virgil's response to their request for directions might have confirmed them in their view that this was the celestial kingdom. "Voi credete / forse che siamo esperti d'esto loco; / ma noi siam peregrin come voi siete. / Dianzi venimmo, innanzi a voi un poco, / per altra via, che fu sì aspra e forte, / che lo salire omai ne parrà gioco" (*Purg.* 2.61–66)—a perfectly appropriate answer for those who might just have completed their purgatorial journey.

Dante then asks Casella to sing one of Dante's own compositions ("Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona"),<sup>39</sup> such that the whole company becomes rapt by the music—a sign of a high comfort level, more explicable if one assumes that they believe they have arrived in Paradise. Suddenly Cato, the unexpected guardian of Purgatory (as a suicide and a pagan), cries out that they are laggard souls who must haste to the mountain ". . . a spogliarvi lo scoglio / ch'esser non lascia a voi Dio manifesto"

(2.122–123). His injunction startles the crowd and disperses it, as each pilgrim flees to the base of the mountain.

Clearly these pilgrims are unsure of where they are. On their arrival, they were already in unfamiliar territory (“*La turba che rimase lì selvaggia / pareo del loco, rimirando intorno / come colui che nove cose assaggia*” [2.52–54]), although the sight of the plains and a mountain may have reassured them. According to J.B. Russell, Old Testament apocrypha glorified the earthly Jerusalem, merging it with the heavenly city on a mountain, either Zion or Sinai, where God dwelt.<sup>40</sup> Common to the heavenly visions of the early Christian martyrs was an image of “a judge on a holy mountain . . . the saved . . . shining white with glory as did Moses on Sinai.”<sup>41</sup> Among the more popular medieval versions of the afterlife was the twelfth-century vision of St. Patrick, in which the saint, after escaping the torments of purgatory, was led to a mountain of the blessed where the entrance to heaven led to the celestial Paradise.<sup>42</sup> In the mid-thirteenth century Gerardesca, a woman tertiary of the Camaldolese order and a recluse in Pisa described heaven as a city that “was surrounded by seven charming castles with arms bearing the glorious Virgin’s name. Situated on steep mountains of precious stones, they had stairs leading up and down, made of even more precious gems . . . .”<sup>43</sup> Another thirteenth-century vision (of Thurkill) encompassed, beyond Purgatory, the Mount of Joy: “On this mountain was built a large church of wonderful structure . . . . There he saw in white apparel many of both sexes whom he had seen in life. They were climbing up to the temple and enjoying great happiness.”<sup>44</sup> From the earliest Christian times up to Dante’s own time, Paradise had often been represented as a mountain, usually surmounted with a garden or a heavenly city patterned on Jerusalem.<sup>45</sup> For a variety of reasons, including the manner of arrival as well as the mountain form in front of them, the pilgrims should have had every expectation that they had reached the new Jerusalem. They would have had no reason to suspect that they were, in fact, at the outskirts of Purgatory.

Since the image of Paradise as a mountain was common, it is unusual for Dante to have placed his Paradise in the celestial spheres<sup>46</sup> and reserved the mountain imagery for Purgatory. Alison Morgan notes that “Dante placed Purgatory on the slopes of the mountain of the Earthly Paradise . . . his mountain has its origin not in any traditional iconography for Purgatory . . . but in the learned traditions of Eden and of Jerusalem.”<sup>47</sup> Dante linked literal accounts of Mount Sinai (as well as accounts of Mt.

Sion) with corresponding valleys, guides and gates, perils, progressive penance and accompanying prayers throughout his *Purgatorio*.<sup>48</sup> As both John Demaray and Jacques Le Goff stress, this was Dante's innovation. Planted on the earth but pointing to heaven, his Purgatory makes a marked break with previous understandings of Purgatory and particularly with popular belief, which was more likely to associate a mountain with Paradise than with penance.<sup>49</sup>

Purgatory was, after all, usually placed underground, because it derived from and was closely associated with Hell. The Hell that *St. Paul's Apocalypse* describes was to become the Purgatory of the twelfth century. Included were rivers of fire, a bottomless abyss, pits of fire or of pitch and brimstone, all in a sort of ante-hell, followed by a deep well with all the torments of Hell proper. The *Purgatory of St. Patrick*, which Jacques Le Goff calls "the doctrine [of Purgatory]'s literary birth certificate" and "one of the best-sellers of the Middle Ages," was a place of torment entered through Lough Derg (Red Lake) cave in Donegal County, Ireland. There demons dragged a knight behind them through a black and dark wilderness and into a long and wide plain filled with woe and calamities.<sup>50</sup> Other visions, such as those of Thurkill and Tunstall, show a somewhat different topography for Purgatory, with purgatorial fire, a large lake and a bridge covered with thorns and stakes (Thurkill), or shadowy valleys, turbulent lakes, a house of death and a swamp (Tundale's vision).<sup>51</sup> In general, however, views of Purgatory current in Dante's time (both literary and visual) resemble most that of St. Patrick, with infernal underworlds of torture, located near a well. The mouths of Purgatory remained very similar to the mouth of Hell. "The topography of the mouths of purgatory centered on caves and caverns."<sup>52</sup> Although not all visions of Purgatory tended in the direction of infernalization, such was the path ultimately taken in the sermon *exempla*, novice literature, hagiography and indulgences of the thirteenth century. The reason, according to Le Goff, "must be sought in an overriding decision by the institutionalized Church in this period to rely on the preaching of fear, to allow its inquisitors to wield instruments of torture in this world as well as in the next."<sup>53</sup> Generally, any pilgrim souls recently deceased in Rome would have been unlikely to recognize Dante's purgatorial mountain as any Purgatory they had known or heard about; it is more likely they would have thought it was Paradise. But there is another reason why the souls in *Purgatorio* Canto 2 would have expected to arrive on the shores of Paradise. They were the

beneficiaries of the extraordinary bull that Pope Boniface VIII had issued on February 22, 1300 offering, “not merely a full and most abundant but the fullest forgiveness of all their sins,” to those traveling to Rome provided they were or would be contrite and confessed.<sup>54</sup>

The vagueness of the wording of Boniface’s papal bull has given rise to discussion as to whether Boniface intended to include remission of both *culpa* (the stain of sin) and *poena* (the punishment for sin). Moreover, did Boniface intend to remit temporal punishments imposed by the Church or did he intend also to remit those carried out in Purgatory? In consistory Boniface interpreted his bull as full, that is, as far as the power and authority vested in the keys of St. Peter extended.<sup>55</sup> But did this extend to the full remission of the guilt of sin or to the remission of punishment in Purgatory, even including the souls of those already dead (such as Casella)? In his comprehensive analysis of the Jubilee, Arsenio Frugoni has argued that Boniface intended the more conservative interpretation, namely the remission of temporal penance alone.<sup>56</sup> His argument is based primarily on Cardinal Jacopo Stefaneschi’s *De centesimo seu jubileo liber*, perhaps the best contemporary account of the Jubilee, written by a nephew and apologist for Boniface, although Stefaneschi himself, in a heroic poem he wrote at the time, supports the argument that both *culpa* and *poena* were to be remitted (see below, p. 21).

In 1300 Boniface was reacting to powerful institutional and popular pressures, and the indulgence bulls that he issued were extraordinary. Although they were grounded in earlier indulgences and the evolving conceptions of penance and remission of sin, they were broader in scope. To the extent that they also applied to those already deceased, they were revolutionary. This paper therefore argues for a less conservative interpretation of Boniface’s indulgences of 1300.

The theology and canon law of penance was remarkably fluid and unstable in the centuries prior to Dante’s writing. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century there was an extended debate over the power of priestly absolution and, in particular, the relationship between the penitent’s process of contrition and the priest’s role in absolution. Debates also focused on whether or not absolution remitted eternal punishment or whether, as Peter Abelard and numerous others argued, confession, satisfaction and absolution remitted temporal punishment and reinstated one’s standing in the Church, while only contrition, accompanied by God’s remittance, released one from sin and eternal pain.<sup>57</sup> If it was contrition

joined with an infusion of God's grace which effectively removed sins, then salvation rested primarily on the subjective acts of a penitent in relation to God. In this case the power of the priestly keys was minimized, leaving the priest to discern whether the status of an individual's soul merited absolution. Others, however, ascribed great powers to absolution by priests. By the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, for example, scholars such as Alain de Lille, Robert de Courcon and Peter the Chanter argued that by granting absolution, priests remitted eternal punishment in Hell and also purgatorial pain.<sup>58</sup> Most opinions vacillated between these two poles, but no one, by the end of the thirteenth century, supposed that the instrumental power of the priest could directly bring about an infusion of grace and the removal of the guilt (*culpa*) of sin.<sup>59</sup> Only inner penitence, accompanied by God's grace, could remove the interior guilt of sin. Dante's position appears to have been close to that of St. Bonaventure, viz., that only the sinner can dispose himself for grace. The only way to obtain it *for others* is through prayer and entreaty, not through absolution. The removal of guilt and the avoidance of eternal punishment were matters that concerned God and the sinner. In contrast, "the combined action of penitent and priest has the nature of a cause only in respect to temporal punishment."<sup>60</sup> Dante's views appear to have been very much in line with those of Bonaventure and with a more restrained interpretation of priestly power, although this argument is based, in part, on silence—on the absence of souls in Purgatory or Heaven who appear to have benefited from priestly absolution, as well as on the emphasis Dante places on the power of prayer to relieve souls of purgatorial pain or even, as in the case of Trajan, to draw a soul from Hell.

The theology of indulgences is somewhat different from the theology and canon law of penance, which focus on the priestly keys of knowledge and power and vest the priest with the power to absolve penitents. These two keys, however, are not the same as the keys vested in prelates nor, in particular, the papacy. Here the keys represent a plenitude of power embracing juridical and spiritual authority that by the thirteenth century, was, as a result of the Donation of Constantine and a host of other authorities and arguments, applied to both the spiritual and the temporal spheres of power. It is under the power of these papal keys rather than the keys of penance that the theory and practice of indulgences arose. As with the priestly keys of penance, however, it became a question of how far spiritual authority, in this case that of the papacy, extended.

The bull “*Antiquorum habet fida*” was offered as a papal indulgence. The practice of papal indulgences originally arose not in a pastoral context but rather in the context of the *reconquista* of Spain and of the Crusades where the papacy commonly offered plenary indulgences and promised complete “*remissio peccatorum*.” As early as the time of Urban II during the preaching of the First Crusade, there was a blurring of the remission of temporal penance and remission of divine punishment, and despite some vacillating the papal curia seems to have settled on remission of divine punishment by the 1170s.<sup>61</sup> The Crusade itself was to substitute for any purgatorial punishments.<sup>62</sup> Such complete remission of sins, however, was rarely applied outside the realm of the Crusades.<sup>63</sup>

Traditionally the Church offered limited indulgences, such as those granted by Pope Alexander III (1181) of from one to three years to pilgrims traveling to Rome or to St. James of Compostela,<sup>64</sup> although pilgrims popularly believed that they attained salvation and skirted purgatory through these journeys.<sup>65</sup> At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, however, the Church responded to a perceived abuse of indulgences by which “the keys of the church are brought into contempt and satisfaction through penance loses its force through indiscriminate and excessive indulgences.” Fourth Lateran required that indulgences be limited to a term of one year at the dedication of a basilica and of forty days at the time of its anniversary.<sup>66</sup> This act applied especially to those indulgences offered by bishops. As we shall see, the papacy did not adhere to these Fourth Lateran standards.

The idea of a treasury of merits of the Church was proposed by Cardinal Hugh of St. Cher as early as 1230.<sup>67</sup> He asserted that the blood of Christ and of the martyrs was a treasure to which the Church holds the keys and which can be distributed by the Church to whomever it desires, in compensation for sins committed. Poschmann remarks: “New, however, was the utilization of the commutation value of their merits, and the claim of the Church to a juridical control over them. The remission of punishment in the hereafter, which formerly had been besought through the intercession of the saints, was now granted by means of an act of jurisdiction.”<sup>68</sup> Thomas Aquinas then based his defense of indulgences on this treasury of the Church, arguing that in the particular case of a papal indulgence “*omnium peccatorum*,” anyone who died went straight to Heaven.<sup>69</sup>



In 1277 Benedetto di Arezzo, a Franciscan, offered proof of a plenary indulgence (complete remission of both *culpa* and *poena*) that had supposedly been given to the Franciscans in 1216 by Pope Honorius III, to all who visited Santa Maria della Porziuncola from Vespers of August 1 to Vespers of August 2. Although documents surfaced in 1277, memory of such an indulgence (if it ever existed) seems to have been lost; nonetheless the indulgence was confirmed by Pope Martin IV in 1282. This indulgence was forcefully defended by Peter Olivi<sup>70</sup> and the Spiritual Franciscans and its popularity attested to by numerous pilgrims who traveled there in the 1280s and 1290s. The loss of Acre in 1291 resulted in increased popular pressure for at-home plenary indulgences since the diminishing attractiveness of crusades limited their accompanying plenary indulgences.<sup>71</sup> In this regard, a pilgrimage to Porziuncola, for example, could become a substitute for penance in the same way that the crusading journey was considered to have been. It was Celestine V's dramatic opening of the Treasury of Christ, his absolving celebrants on the eighth day of his coronation of both *poena* and *culpa* and his gift of plenary indulgences to those who visited Santa Maria di Collemaggio, a site special to Celestine, once a year, however, that set the stage for Boniface VIII's Indulgence of 1300.<sup>72</sup> Boniface, who revoked Celestine's indulgences and, until 1300, kept within the canonical limits as stated by Fourth Lateran, was nonetheless eager to cater to popular expectations with regard to the Jubilee and willing to respond to pressure from the clergy associated with St. Peter's to proclaim an extraordinary papal indulgence for the centennial year of 1300. Cardinal Stefaneschi describes the opinion of some around Boniface (probably the canons at St. Peter's, including Stefaneschi himself) that a great indulgence should occur in Rome in 1300. This notion had the effect of privileging Rome (and St. Peter's in particular) rather than, for example, Porziuncola or Santa Maria di Collemaggio. The Jubilee of 1300 refocused attention on Rome, just as the Crusades had earlier refocused the attention of Christian Europe on Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup>

Beginning on the evening of January 1, 1300, throngs of people expecting a great indulgence for that day, which would end at midnight, began to congregate at St. Peter's, perhaps because of a sermon preached that day at St. Peter's or perhaps because of a divine sign (Stefaneschi gives several reasons). According to various accounts solicited by Boniface and by members of his papal curia, including those of some very aged individuals, pilgrims were expecting great indulgences like those said to have

been granted in the year 1200. Cardinal Stefaneschi reported that some people affirmed the belief that in the first year of the century the Church could cancel the stain of all sins.<sup>74</sup> Although Boniface could not find any written record of earlier jubilees, his issuance of “*Antiquorum habet fida*” showed his willingness to respect popular belief and to accommodate the desires of the Vatican clergy. Boniface’s choice of February 22 (the feast of the Chair of St. Peter) for announcing the Jubilee highlighted his Petrine concerns.<sup>75</sup> “*Antiquorum habet fida*” went beyond every previous plenary indulgence in scope; it was not limited to a specific day or a specific celebration but covered the entire year. And it was less closely bound to place.<sup>76</sup> Although “*Antiquorum habet fida*” required that pilgrims reach Rome and visit the two basilicas, the bull “*Ad honorem Dei*,” which closed the Jubilee, extended the indulgence to those foreigners in Rome who had not yet completed the stations nor received the indulgence, to those who had not yet reached Rome or who might have been impeded along the way, as well as to those who had died either on the way or in the city without having stayed the requisite number of days.<sup>77</sup> Like the Crusades, it was the act of turning toward the holy site, as much as the actual completion of the journey, that mattered.

The chroniclers of the time were very clear that Boniface’s bull included remission of both earthly satisfaction and of the sin itself in the afterlife. Cardinal Stefaneschi, who at times refers only to the punishment alleviated by the plenary indulgence, at other times refers to the “great grace of the Holy Spirit, that cancels the stain of all sins.”<sup>78</sup> He reports that the belief that the *culpa* of sin would be fully cancelled was current among the French.<sup>79</sup> In a heroic poem he wrote on the Jubilee, Stefaneschi specifically refers to the treasury of merits, referring to Christ’s redemption of sins through his blood and to the accumulated merits of SS Peter and Paul, because of which the Roman See, from its overabundant grace, had cancelled all sin that had stained the soul. He concludes the poem with an image of souls looking to the reign of Heaven, with faults cancelled through the grace of the Apostolic See, the blood of Christ, and the merits of the holy apostles.<sup>80</sup> In his *Cronica*, written soon after 1300, Giovanni Villani observes:

“Negli anni di Cristo 1300 secondo la nativitate di Christo, con ciò fosse cosa che si dicesse per molti, che per addietro ogni centesimo d’anni della natività di Christo, il papa ch’era in que’ tempi faceva grande indulgenza, papa Bonifazio ottavo che allora era apostolico, nel detto anno a reverenza della natività di

Cristo, fece somma e grande indulgenza in questo modo: che qualunque Romano visitasse infra tutto il detto anno, continuando trenta dì, le chiese de' beati apostoli santo Pietro e santo Paolo, e per quindici dì l'altra universale gente che no fossono Romani, a tutti fece piena e intera perdonanza di tutti i suoi peccati, essendo confesso o si confessasse di colpa e di pena . . . ."<sup>81</sup>

A chronicler at Bury St. Edmunds in England noted:

"The year of the Lord 1300 was a Jubilee year or year of absolution . . . In this year people of both sexes and every age from all over the Christian world hastened to the Roman court. For on account of the Jubilee year the Pope absolved all pilgrims who had truly confessed and were contrite, from all their sins and punishment for sins."<sup>82</sup>

In a contemporaneous account, Giovanni Monaco explained that the 100-year celebration rather than the traditional 50-year Jubilee was invoked because it included a double indulgence ("duplex indulgentia"), viz., *poena et culpa*.<sup>83</sup> As Cardinal Stefaneschi's heroic song on the Jubilee notes, "the door of heaven [lay] open," restoring man to his "heavenly homeland and the family of citizens on high."<sup>84</sup> It was clear to contemporaries that Boniface's plenary indulgence meant immediate admission into Paradise for those who came, confessed and contrite, to follow the required stations at Rome.<sup>85</sup>

Other evidence for substantiating this understanding of Boniface's Jubilee indulgence comes late but is nonetheless suggestive. A legend that may have been current in 1300 was related by Pero Tafur in 1437 and by Giovanni Rucellai in 1449, viz., that the Tarpeian door (the door Caesar opened to take Rome's treasure) became, under Pope Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine, a door that absolved those who entered through it from both *culpa* and *poena*. The legend then goes on to say that because many people sinned bravely with the intention of being absolved at that door, the pope locked it and decreed that it was to be opened only every 100 (a term later reduced to 50) years.<sup>86</sup> That this legend was current in the year 1300, may be suggested by Dante, who patterns his purgatorial gate (in *Purg.* 11) on the Tarpeian door, which, he suggests, is rusty from lack of use and heavy on its hinges—despite the fact that it was already Easter of the Jubilee year. Clearly, despite what Boniface had decreed or the people chose to believe, Dante did not think that many had passed on to Paradise as a consequence of the Jubilee. In this regard Dante was very

much opposed to popular belief, and, as argued here, the stated intention of Boniface's bulls in 1300.

A final example of popular belief comes from the "Stacions of Rome," an English text dating from about 1370 but reflecting earlier practices. It details the varieties of pardons to be gained by pilgrimage to Rome (e.g., 14,000 years of pardon for those coming to the anniversary of the consecration of St. Martins, 7,000 years of pardon for all their sins for contrite men that visit St. Anastasius, or full remission of all sins at the underground chapel where martyr-popes lived. The poem suggests that Boniface's plenary indulgence of 1300 remained permanently in effect: "Al is forgiven thee. So I herde of clerkes that there han be. And if thow dye thiderward Hevene blisse, schall ben thi part . . . And pardon in Rome that is grete the Stacions there men hit clepe Pope Bonefas confemed alle for ever more lasten hit schalle . . ." <sup>87</sup> Surely, pilgrim souls benefiting from the indulgence of 1300 would have expected to go directly to Paradise. No wonder the pilgrims in *Purgatory* 2 were shaken when Cato appeared, admonishing them to hasten up the mountain; nor is it surprising that Dante sees the souls move toward the mountain, "com'om che va, né sa dove riesca" (*Purg.* 2.132).

Boniface based his plenary indulgence not only on the treasury of the Church but also, and especially, on the power of the keys to open the door of that treasury. Boniface exalted his use of the two keys, labeled as temporal and spiritual keys, which he interpreted as the full authority that the pope exercised. The extent to which the declaration of the jubilee indulgence was grounded in papal assertions of plenitude of power within the Church Militant is made clear by Cardinal Giovanni Monaco's commentary and his descriptions of Boniface VIII's understanding in consistory in 1300.<sup>88</sup> It is apparent in his unusual promotion of images of himself. Unlike any previous pope, Boniface erected and promoted the erection of numerous statues of himself, which caused a sensation at the time and was to result in an accusation of idolatry on the part of the counselors of King Philip IV of France.<sup>89</sup> Two statues, one a monumental bronze and the other a tomb sculpture in St. Peter's, both completed by Arnolfo di Cambio by 1300, reveal the unprecedented and active gesture of Boniface holding the keys in his left hand while blessing with his right hand. It is therefore noteworthy in *Purgatory* 9 that it is an angel<sup>90</sup> who is the vicar of St. Peter and who carries the keys to open the gate of Purgatory. These are not the keys of papal authority, which is signified instead

by a single sword (of spiritual authority) rather than by the two swords (of temporal and spiritual authority) claimed by the thirteenth-century papacy and by theocratic papal theorists such as Giles of Rome and others. The keys of gold and silver that unlock the gate of Purgatory are drawn from the angelic vesture only after Dante has accepted the precise pattern of penance symbolized by the steps of contrition, confession, and satisfaction. They are the gold and silver keys of knowledge and power; they do not absolve Dante, but they open the way to the seven levels of purgatorial penance that lead to the earthly paradise where Dante will be absolved.

A final question: To what extent did the privileges and indulgences offered by Pope Boniface benefit those already dead? Amerindo Camilli has noted that papal indulgences for the dead were first conceded by Pope Calixtus III in 1457, although he cites earlier evidence of popular opinion demanding this concession; and he notes that St. Thomas as well as St. Bonaventure had proposed that indulgences be applicable to souls in purgatory.<sup>91</sup> Dante, he believes, was not reflecting papal practice but rather popular beliefs as well as thirteenth-century theology in portraying Casella, already deceased, as benefiting from the papal bull. In actuality, however, Boniface *was* applying indulgences to the souls of the dead. It is already implied in his action making the papal bull of February 22, 1300 retroactive to December 25, 1299. It would have covered, obviously, those already dead. In addition, Pope Boniface issued, on Christmas 1300, a *gratia non bullata* ("Ad honorem Dei," referred to above) giving plenary indulgences to all those who had not been able to complete their journeys because they had not yet reached Rome or had died on the way, or were in the city prior to completing their stations, that is to say, even those without contrition or confession as well as those already dead. Boniface's exercise of papal power over the souls of those in the afterlife could not have been more clear.

Dante's stress on the need for contrition and for reliance on pious prayers and the role of Divine Justice and Divine Grace reminds us of his penitents of the last hour—Jacopo del Cassero, Buonconte da Montefeltro, and Pia—who are absolved by grace despite dying unshriven by the Church. In Dante's afterworld, contrition at the last moment, even without the intercession of a priest, is sufficient to save souls from Hell. While contrition prevented eternal damnation, it was not enough by itself to ensure entry into Paradise: Dante insisted on the need for penance—an

arduous task in his Purgatory. In this, he was in step with the traditions of the Church that laid stress, as did St. Gregory the Great, on the conversion of the mind, the confession of the mouth, and the fruits of penance, or, as St. Bonaventure and many others put it, contrition, confession, and satisfaction.<sup>92</sup> Dante's ideas are more in line with the ideas of the theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly the ideas of Peter Abelard and Peter Lombard, and the theology of penance of St. Bonaventure, all of which limited the efficacy of absolution to an amount of temporal punishment and the sinner's status within the Church. He clearly had no sympathy for the direction that the papacy of Boniface VIII was taking, with its treasury of merits, its extraordinary plenary indulgences that cancelled *culpa* and *poena* in the afterlife for both the living and the dead, and its exalted power of the keys. In this sense Dante was a conservative, harking back to an earlier time before plenary indulgences, indulgences for the dead, and papal authority, could open (or, in Dante's case, close) the doors of Paradise to sinners.

All of this does not completely explain Casella's words to Dante. That Casella, who had most probably died prior to the papal bull of February 22, should wend his way to Rome and to Ostia to be taken to Purgatory, is not extraordinary. We should have to believe that Casella was confessed and contrite, but we do not have to believe that he was a beneficiary of Boniface's jubilee bull. It is possible, however, that Casella believed in Boniface's promises. If so his disembarkation on the shores of Purgatory, as well as his suffering before reaching the bolted gate to Purgatory, rusty from lack of use and heavy on its hinges,<sup>93</sup> will eventually disabuse him of such promises.

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## NOTES

1. All quotes from Dante are from *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. Giorgio Petrocchi, (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67; 2nd ed., Florence: Le Lettere, 1994).

2. “. . . ad basilicas ipsas accedentibus reverenter, vere poenitentibus et confessis, vel qui vere poenitebunt et confitebuntur, in huiusmodi praesenti et quolibet centesimo secuturo annis, non solum plenam et largiorem, immo plenissimam omnium suorum concedemus et concedimus veniam peccatorum.” For the full text of this bull, see *Bullarium Anni Sancti*, ed. Hermanus Schmidt, *Textus et Documenta*, Series Theologica 28 (Rome: Pontifica Universitas Gregoriana, 1949), 33–34.

3. Iacopi Caetani Stefaneschi, "De centesimo seu jubileo anno liber," ed. Quattrocchi, *Bessarione*, IV, vol. 7 (1889–1900), 304: "Nec silentio pretereundum opinamur, romipetas licet sepius ut recisius tempus, apostolico munere assequeretur, supplicationibus flagitaverint, ne quicquam exauditos, sed tribus modo vicibus promeritos. Una in cene domini celebritate laterani sub divo ab ipso fante pontifice congregate multitudini gratiam" ("We are of the opinion that we should not pass over in silence the fact that pilgrims to Rome often entreated Boniface VIII, in vain, to reduce the time for visits to the basilicas. Only three times were such changes merited. The first such indulgence was given by the pope at the celebration of the Lord's supper at the Lateran, in the open air, before a collected multitude"). See also Chiara Frugoni, *Due Papi per un Giubileo: Celestino V, Bonifacio VIII e il primo Anno Santo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2000), 219–20, 236, and 257, n. 112.

4. It has also been argued that it represents Boniface's election in 1295, or that it represents the event when he affirmed the supremacy of St. Peter's over the Lateran, or the first publication of the Jubilee in February, or that it even predates Boniface's election. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, 249, n. 76. Herbert L. Kessler and Johanna Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the path of the pilgrim* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 30, suggest that the fresco represents Boniface's election. Charles Mitchell, "The Lateran Fresco of Boniface VIII," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 (1951), 1–6, suggests that it represents Boniface's February 22 announcement of the Jubilee; Silvia Maddalo, "Alcune considerazioni sulla topografia del complesso lateranense allo scadere del secolo XIII: il Patriarchio nell'anno del Giubileo," *Roma Anno 1300*, 627–628, argues that it represents Boniface's formal possession of the Lateran in 1295. Alessandro Tomei, "Giotto a Roma intorno al primo giubileo," *La storia dei Giubilei*, vol. 1 (Florence: BNL Edizioni, 1997), 239–244, argues that the fresco predates 1295. The election, first publication of Jubilee bulls, as well as, probably, the announcement of Vatican supremacy, took place at St. Peter's; it is unlikely that they would be portrayed as occurring at the Lateran palace. Maddalo's and Tomei's arguments require the balcony to have been constructed before 1295. This balcony, however, according to a marble inscription, was built by Boniface in 1300. The inscription was reported by Onofrio Panvinio in 1570 and later confirmed by Pompeo Ugonio; this alone is a strong argument for the 1300 date for the fresco. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, 218–240, 253, note 95 and 255, note 102. Boniface's benediction on Holy Thursday at St. John's Lateran in 1300 would have followed a ritual that dated from at least the early twelfth century. Traditionally this included, besides the papal benediction, an indulgence of 100 days. Michele Maccarrone, "L'indulgenza del Giubileo del 1300 e la Basilica di San Pietro," *Roma Anno 1300*, Atti della IV Settimana di Studi di storia dell'Arte Medievale dell'Università di Roma "La Sapienza" 1980, ed. Angiola Maria Romanini (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1983), 742, and n. 70. Boniface codified this tradition and then, in 1300, enlarged it.

5. The text in the fresco, which begins "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam," is the beginning of the second Jubilee bull "Nuper per alias;" it is not the same as the first bull proclaiming the Jubilee, which begins "Ad certitudinem presentium et memoriam futurorum." Maccarrone, "L'indulgenza del Giubileo del 1300," 749–750. For the full text, see the *Bullarium Anni Sancti*, 34–35.

6. Those excluded include: "illos falsos et impios christianos qui portaverunt vel portabunt merces seu res prohibitas Saracenis, vel ad terras eorum reportaverunt vel reportabunt ab eis nec non Fredericum natum Condam Petri olim regis Aragonum ac Siculos Nobis et Ecclesiae Romanae hostes, insuper Columnenses, damnatos per Nos nostros et apostolicae Sedis rebelles, et qui receptabunt Columnenses eosdem et generaliter omnes et singulos publicos hostes et rebelles praesentes et futuros Ecclesiae memoratae et impugnatores ipsius et qui dabunt scienter supradictis, vel eorum alicui seu aliquibus auxilium, consilium, vel favorem publice vel occulte . . ." For the full text of this bull, see *Bullarium Anni Sancti*, 34–35.

7. There is general agreement that Dante was in Rome in the Jubilee year of 1300. A little more than a year later Dante, along with many others, was forced into exile by a coalition of the party of Black Guelphs in Florence, Pope Boniface VIII, and Charles of Valois. Dino Compagni, a contemporary of Dante, chronicled these events about ten years after they occurred: "The citizens of Florence, divided like this, began to slander one another throughout the neighboring cities and in Pope Boniface's court at Rome, spreading false information . . . They worked on the pope, telling him that the city would return to the hands of the Ghibellines and become a bastion for the Colonna, and

they reinforced these lies with a great deal of money. The pope was persuaded to break the power of the Florentines, and so he promised to aid the Black Guelphs with the great power of Charles of Valois . . . . The pope wrote that he wanted messer Charles to make peace in Tuscany, opposing those who had rebelled against the Church. This commission of peacemaker had a very good name, but its purpose was just the opposite, for the pope's aim was to bring down the Whites and raise up the Blacks, and make the Whites enemies of the royal house of France and of the Church." *Dino Compagni's Chronicle of Florence*, trans. Daniel E. Bornstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 33–34. The Black Guelphs, with the support of Charles of Valois, entered Florence on November 6–7, 1301, and forced the Signoria out of office, torturing, arresting and exiling many, including Dante (who was, at the time, on a mission to Pope Boniface).

8. Peter Armour, *The Door of Purgatory: A Study of Multiple Symbolism in Dante's Purgatorio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 182.

9. This mountain connotes the way of philosophy. Passages from Lactantius and from Augustine support a reading where the pursuit of philosophy is likened to a mountain clothed by the light of truth but is not itself the truth. Anthony K. Cassell, *Lectura Dantis Americana* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 19–30.

10. Chiara Frugoni, "L'ideologia del potere imperiale nella cattedra di S. Pietro," *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo* 86 (1976–77), 65–181; and on Boniface particularly, see Frugoni, *Due Papi*, chap. 3. One particularly remembers Boniface's papal bull of 1302, "Unam Sanctam," which stated the extreme theocratic position that temporal authority ought to be subject to the spiritual power, as well as Boniface's remark to the ambassadors of Albert of Hapsburg in 1298, "Ego sum Caesar; Ego sum imperator." Charles Mitchell, "The Lateran Fresco of Boniface VIII," 5–6, notes the striking similarities between the Lateran fresco of Boniface VIII and the relief of the Emperor Theodosius on an obelisk in Constantinople, arguing that Boniface wished to project an imperial presence.

11. "[D]amnatum cum diabolo et angelis ejus . . . in igne aeterno judicamus," cited by Elisabeth Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 45–46. The rite of anathema was generally employed against the powerful and the contumacious, such as Manfred, as part of the solemnity of the greater excommunication. It signified "the excommunicate's delivery to Satan" (46). Technically, in thirteenth-century canon law, the pope (or his bishops) could not condemn a soul to hell, although, as Richard Helmholtz notes, "Gratian's *Decretum* had described excommunication as equivalent to 'handing a person over to the Devil'" ("Excommunication in Twelfth Century England," *Journal of Law and Religion* 11 [1994], 235). In 1245 Pope Innocent IV declared that excommunication "did not jeopardize salvation unless it was ignored or condemned," a change that may have gone "largely unnoticed by the faithful" (Vodola, 42).

12. Dante, *Monarchy and Three Political Letters*, trans. Donald Nicholl (New York: Noonday Press, 1954), 76.

13. Allan Mowbray, "Does Dante Hope for Virgil's Salvation?" *MLN* 104.1 (1989), 193–205.

14. Presumably to make way for Judas.

15. Marcia Colish, "The Virtuous Pagan: Dante and the Christian Tradition," *The Unbounded Community: Papers in Christian Ecumenism in honor of Jaroslav Pelikan*, ed. Duncan Fisher and William Cafiero (New York: Garland Press, 1995), 46–55.

16. Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 11–12.

17. "The Care to be Taken for the Dead," trans. John A. Lacy, in *Saint Augustine: Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, vol. 15 of *The Fathers of the Church* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955), 383.

18. *Self and Society in Medieval France: The Memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent (1064?–c.1125)*, ed. and trans. J. F. Benton (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 92–93.

19. Aquinas, *Supplement*, q. 71; Le Goff, *Birth of Purgatory*, 275.

20. "Religiosis tamen quindecim vel decem dies sufficere largitus, in missas seu orationum suffragia temporis residuum convertit." Stefaneschi, *De centesimo*, 304–305.



21. Dante's position here is traditional. As we shall see, Boniface's position was less clearly orthodox. In the papal bull that ended the Jubilee year "Ad honorem Dei" Boniface extended the plenary indulgence to those who may have died on the way or may not have arrived yet or may not have completed their stations. He says nothing about the need for contrition and confession for these souls.

22. On the delay, see Amerindo Camilli, "La bolla giubilare di Bonifacio VIII, le indulgenze per i defunti e il ritardo di Casella," *Studi Danteschi*, 30 (1951), 207–9. The delay is also probably suggested by Virgil, *Aeneid*, III, 201–206; VI, 315–330.

23. It is therefore odd that Dante suggests that the angel only began to accept the newly-arrived dead on January 10 (Easter having fallen on April 10 in 1300). Most commentators have concluded that Dante was using the date March 25 as an idealized date for his Easter arrival in Purgatory. This date is the day of Christ's incarnation and the first day of the centenary in the Florentine calendar. Armour, *The Door of Purgatory*, 167–68; *L'ultima opera di Giovanni Boccaccio, le Esposizioni sopra il Dante*, ed. G. Padoan (Padua: CEDAM, 1959), 25, 78; E. Moore, "The Date Assumed by Dante for the Vision of the *Divina Commedia*," in *Studies in Dante: Third Series*, rpt. (New York: Greenwood, 1968), 154–57. This date would suggest that the angel had begun to accept all who wished to embark from December 25, the date retroactively described in Pope Boniface's Jubilee indulgence.

24. John Sinclair, trans. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: II Purgatorio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 42.

25. Charles Singleton, in his commentary on *Purgatorio* 2, notes that the souls passing to Purgatory appear to have participated in the plenary indulgence of 1300, and those already dead appear to be saved according to common belief. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, translated, with a commentary, by Charles S. Singleton, *Purgatorio*, vol. 2 Commentary (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 38. There is no indication anywhere in Singleton's commentary that Dante may have been critical of Boniface or of the Jubilee. Peter Armour, who argues that Dante was deeply disillusioned with Boniface already by 1300, nonetheless thinks that Dante accepted the efficacy of Boniface's Jubilee indulgences. "Dante accepted not only the basic theology of the occasion, but also the extended application of the Jubilee indulgences to the dead . . ." (Armour, *The Door of Purgatory*, 147). Joan Ferrante, while wondering whether or not Dante is suggesting that the Church was defrauding sinners with false promises of salvation, concludes that Dante acknowledges the power of papal indulgences, assuming that Casella was sincerely repentant. See *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 170 n. 52; cf. also John S. Carroll, *Prisoners of Hope: An Exposition of Dante's Purgatorio* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1971), where he notes that "It would be impossible for Dante to give a stronger proof of his belief in the absolute validity of acts of Papal authority even when exercised by a Boniface VIII, whom as a man he both hated and despised" (30). Only Daniele Mattalia, in a 1960 commentary on Canto 2, suggests, in contrast, that Dante was either offering a symbolic protest against the tardy proclamation of the Jubilee or acclaiming the bull's non-validity before God. See *Dante Alighieri, La Divina Commedia*, ed. Daniele Mattalia (Milan: Rizzoli, 1961), 2:49 n.98.

26. Generally this mosaic is dated to 1300. See Kessler and Zacharias, 217–218, and Antonio Thiery, "Comunicazione e immagine nella Roma del Giubileo dal Concretismo di Francesco d'Assisi al realismo di Giotto," *Roma Anno 1300*, 546; but Alessandro Tomei argues for a date a bit later, in the first decade of the fourteenth century ("Giotto a Roma," 247). The hypothesis that Giotto's Navicella was completed by the Jubilee year, if sustained, would enrich our understanding of Dante's ship image; nonetheless, Dante was not always concerned with historical accuracy, and he may have had Giotto's image in mind regardless of whether it was in place by 1300.

27. Thiery, "Comunicazione," 546. As several commentators have argued there was a concerted campaign on the part of popes from Nicholas III to Boniface VIII, in the face of the losses in the Holy Land, to replace Jerusalem as the locus of popular piety and pilgrimage and to raise Rome to the position of being the New Jerusalem and the salvific center of the world (Thiery, "Comunicazione," passim; Frugoni, *Due Papi*, passim; Maccarrone, "L'indulgenza," 738, esp. note 42; Franco Cardini, "L'eclisse di Gerusalemme, Fallimento della crociata in Terrasanta, nascita del Giubileo," *La Storia dei Giubilei*, vol. 1 [Florence: BNL Edizioni, 1997], 56–69.) A papal bull of Nicholas III in 1279 states clearly that St. Peter's is the symbol of celestial Jerusalem. According to Thiery, one can

even see the celestial symbolism in the Giotto Lateran fresco, where the three fingers of the benediction signal the celestial realm, supported by three columns, which signify the same.

28. Kessler and Zacharias, *Rome 1300*, 84, 144.

29. This text was known, but not taken too seriously, by St. Augustine. Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 61. Hugh of St. Victor, in his twelfth-century *Didascalicon*, lists it among the apocryphal writings.

30. "Saint Paul's Apocalypse," in *Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante*, ed. Eileen Gardiner (New York: Italica Press, 1989): "Et eram super Acherusium, et inmisit me in navem auream, et angeli quasi tria milia hymnum ante me dicentes dum pervenerimus usque in civitatem Christi" (30); Theodore Silverstein, '*Visio Sancti Pauli*': *the History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts* (London: Christophers, 1935), 138. See also p. 141: "et vidi principium celi fundatum super flumen aque magnum. Et interrogavi, 'Quis est hic fluvius aque?' Et dicit mihi, 'Hic est Oceanum qui circuit orbem terrae'" ("And I saw the beginning of heaven founded on a great river of water, and I asked, 'What is this river of water?' And he said to me, 'This is the Ocean that circles the whole earth'"). *St. Paul's Apocalypse* includes a number of themes echoed by Dante, such as viewing the smallness of earth from the third heaven, the value of last-minute repentance, and a visit of Archangel Michael to Hell.

31. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *A History of Heaven: The Singing Silence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 105–109.

32. Psalm 113 (114): "When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion . . . Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob . . ."

33. Kessler and Zacharias, *Rome 1300*, 98, 139, 144.

34. On the importance of the Exodus motif, see Charles Singleton, *Dante's Commedia: Elements of Structure* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1977). See also Singleton, "In Exitu Israel de Aegypto," in *Dante: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. John Freccero (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1965): 102–121; John Demaray, *The Invention of Dante's Commedia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), passim; Dunstan J. Tucker, O.S.B., "In Exitu Israel de Aegypto: The Divine Comedy in the Light of the Easter Liturgy," *American Benedictine Review*, 11 (1960), 43–61; Carol V. Kaske, "Mount Sinai and Dante's Mount Purgatory," *Dante Studies*, 89 (1971), 1–18; *Petri Allegherii super Dantis Ipsius Genitoris Comoediam Commentarium*, ed. Vincenzo Nannucci (Florence: Angelum Garinei, 1845), 288–289, 305; and Benvenuto da Imola, *Benvenuti de Rambaldi de Imola Comentum Super Dantis Aldigherii Comoediam*, Vol. 3 (Florence, 1837), 63–64, cited by Tucker.

35. Demaray, *The Invention of Dante's Commedia*, 66, 135–138.

36. This shade, whom Dante recognizes, was a musician of Florence (and Pistoia) who had set some of Dante's verses to music. The Anonimo fiorentino, in his commentary on *The Divine Comedy*, says: "Questi . . . fue Casella da Pistoja grandissimo musico, et massimamente nell'arte dello 'ntonare; et fu molto domestico dell'Auttore, però che in sua giovinezza fece Dante molte canzone e ballate, che questi intonò; et a Dante diletto forte l'udirle da lui, et massimamente al tempo ch'era innamorato di Beatrice, o di Pargoletta, o di quella altra de Casentino." *Comento alla Divina Commedia d'Anonimo Fiorentino del secolo XIV*, ed. Pietro Fanfani (Bologna: G. Ramagnoli, 1866–74); Benvenuto da Imola, in his commentary, remarks: "Casella mio nome di un fiorentino, famoso cantante del tempo di Dante, molto gentile, che accostava spessissimo per ricrearsi colla dolcezza del canto dalle fatiche dello studio, e dalle sventure di amore." *Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola illustrato nella vita e nelle opere e di lui commento latino sulla Divina Commedia di Dante Allighieri*, trans. Giovanni Tamburini (Imola: Tipografia Galeati, 1855–56), 50.

37. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 60.

38. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, 28. A late, but very powerful image of the elect embracing one another in Heaven is Giovanni di Paolo's fifteenth-century painting of the Last Judgment in Siena. Robert Hughes, *Heaven and Hell in Western Art* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1968), 26–27.

39. This canzone, which Dante analyses throughout Book 3 of his *Convivio*, praises a lady, who personifies Lady Philosophy. Depending on how these pilgrims interpret this canzone, it is, even if

interpreted allegorically, focused on human intelligence and human love striving for divine perfection; it is not focused on God or Paradise itself, e.g., "That in her face [the face of Philosophy] things appear which show some of the pleasures of Paradise." *Dante, The Banquet*, trans. Christopher Ryan (Saratoga, California: ANMA Libri, 1989), 77–78.

40. Russell, *A History of Heaven*, 32–38. Russell gives the example of the Book of Enoch in which there is "a mountain like the throne of God, which is 'of alabaster and whose summit is of sapphire.'"

41. Russell, *A History of Heaven*, 58.

42. After Patrick had passed through Purgatory, "the reverend prelates now led the knight to the sloping side of a mountain and told him to look up. When he had done this, they asked him what color heaven was in comparison with the place where he stood. He replied that it was like the color of red-hot gold in a furnace. They said, "What you now see is the entrance to heaven and the celestial paradise. When anyone leaves us that person ascends this way to heaven" (*Visions of Heaven and Hell before Dante*, ed. Gardiner, 145). *St. Patrick's Purgatory* was available through many collections of visions, miracle stories and saints' lives, including the ubiquitous *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine. There were various Latin versions of *St. Patrick's Purgatory* along with five redactions into Italian and seven into French. P. Villari, "Il Purgatorio di S. Patrizio," *Antiche leggende e tradizione che illustrano la Divina Commedia* (Pisa: Tipografia Nistri, 1865), reprinted 1979, 51–76; L. Bertolini, "Per una delle leggende che illustrano la 'Divina Commedia': una redazione del 'Purgatorio di San Patrizio,'" *Studi danteschi* 53 (1981), 69–128; Alison Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 144–65.

43. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 76, taken from an anonymous biography printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*, rev. ed. Jean Carnaudet (Paris: Palmé, 1866), vol. 7, 168.

44. *Ibid.*, 222. Thurkill's vision was not as popular as that of St. Patrick, and there is no particular indication that Dante knew it. There are only two extant manuscripts of it, but it was recounted in the *Flores historiarum* of Roger of Wendover and the *Chronica maiorum* of Matthew Paris. See Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World*, 230–231, and 'Visio Thurkilli' *relatore, ut videtur, Radulpho de Coggeshall*, edited P.G. Schmidt (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1978).

45. Two early fourteenth-century frescos of Paradise as a mountain include a fresco at the papal palace at Avignon and another at the church of Santa Maria in Loreto, Italy. Hughes, *Heaven and Hell*, 61; Richard Cavendish, *Visions of Heaven and Hell* (London: Orbis, 1977), 52–53.

46. It was not entirely unknown in the eleventh and twelfth centuries for scholars to place Paradise in the celestial spheres, but it was not part of the popular tradition. Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World*, 160–95.

47. Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World*, 160.

48. John Demaray, *The Invention of Dante's Commedia*, *passim*, is quite persuasive in arguing for these links.

49. Alison Morgan argues that there was a popular tradition of mountains as a place of purgatorial torment, but the examples she cites (*The Voyage of Saint Brendan*, the *Vision of Charles the Fat* and fourteenth vision of Othlo, the *Vision of Thurkill*, and the account of Bonvesin) are all visions of Hell, several of which (Thurkill and Bonvesin) include various mountains and valleys, with Thurkill always descending. The similarities, if there are any, seem more like the rocky slopes of Dante's Hell. Of the others, Brendan's voyage ends at an island Paradise, while the islands that symbolize Hell are rocky and volcanic, but not clearly mountainous. The vision of Othlo as well as that of Thurkill were not popular and would probably not have influenced Dante or been instrumental in shaping popular opinion on the afterlife. Only the *Vision of Charles the Fat* and the thirteenth-century *Libro de le tre scritture* of Bonvesin da la Riva might have been known to Dante; in both, the mentions of mountains in Hell are multiple and part of a larger landscape. There are, however, three texts that specifically mention purgatorial mountains. One, an eleventh-century *Vision of Wetti*, tells of a mountain, on the summit of which a certain abbot was assigned to complete his purgation (Morgan, *Dante and the Medieval Other World*, 159, 232). There are seven known manuscripts of this vision. The earliest account of St. Patrick's Purgatory mentions a purgatorial mountain, but this description is not included in the various redactions throughout Europe. One final vision, mentioned by Morgan, the

twelfth-century *Monk of Evesham's Vision*, includes several mountains with heat and cold and souls being tossed down their sides into a fetid lake. Jacques Le Goff concludes that, while there were a few instances of purgatory being associated with mountains, the increasingly popular idea of Purgatory in the thirteenth century was as an underground ante-chamber to Hell. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, passim.

50. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 193–201.

51. Tundale's vision, written in the mid-twelfth century, had wide distribution throughout medieval Europe. Over 200 manuscripts have survived, both in Latin and various vernaculars. Of all the popular vision literature, it has, perhaps, the greatest number of parallels with the *Divine Comedy*, including an angel coming like a bright star, the levels Tundale visits (upper Hell, lower Hell, the resting place of the not-very-good and Paradise), the detailed punishments of various classes of sinners, a river flowing into the mouth of a beast called Acheron, the participation of Tundale in the penitential experiences, the ongoing dialogue between the angel-guide and Tundale, a frozen swamp of ice, bodies turning into beasts, a field of princes resting between Hell and Paradise, and so forth.

52. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 201.

53. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, 259 and chapter 9.

54. Relatively few commentators have looked in any detail at the relevance of the Jubilee Year of 1300 for understanding Canto 2, although the work of Peter Armour is a significant exception. On the Jubilee as an emblem of the mountain of pardon, see Armour, "Purgatorio I–II," *Dante Soundings*, ed. David Nolan (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1981), esp. 89–92. In his book *The Door of Purgatory* Armour uses the personal and universal significance of the year 1300, along with an idealized theology of penance (the fulfillment of an uncorrupted Church), as a frame for interpreting Canto 9 and, in effect, the entire *Purgatorio* (esp. in 3.2).

55. "[I]n quantum se clavium potestas Petrique auctoritas extendere . . ." (Stefaneschi, *De centesimo*, 310).

56. Arsenio Frugoni, "Il Giubileo di Boniface VIII," *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano* 62 (1950), 1–121.

57. Paul Anciaux, *La Théologie du Sacrement de Pénitence au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts and Duculot, 1949), passim.

58. Anciaux, *La Théologie*, 312, 513ff.

59. Ralph Ohlmann, O.F.M., "St. Bonaventure and the Power of the Keys," *Franciscan Studies* 6 (1946), 437.

60. Ohlmann, "St. Bonaventure," 440–441.

61. Jonathan Riley-Smith, *What were the Crusades?* (Totowa, New Jersey; Rowman & Littlefield, 1977), 60–62. See also, James Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 139–159.

62. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, 74.

63. In a commentary on Boniface VIII's canon law collection, *Extravagantes Communes*, Cardinal Giovanni Monaco, who was present at the consistories where the Jubilee of 1300 was being discussed, testified that he had heard from Boniface's own mouth that he [Boniface] was associating the jubilee plenary indulgence with the then only other form of plenary indulgence, that of the crusade. Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "Il Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII," *La storia dei Giubilei*, vol. 1 (Florence: BNL Edizioni, 1997), 178.

64. Maccarrone, "L'indulgenza," 731.

65. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, 57; Demaray, *The Invention of Dante's Commedia*, 17.

66. *The Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, ed. Norman P. Tanner, S. J. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 264.

67. Bernhard Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), 223.

68. Poschmann, *Penance and the Anointing of the Sick*, 224.

69. Poschmann, *Penance*, 223; Aquinas, *Quodlibet* 2, q.8, a.2.

70. "La "Quaestio fr. Johannis Olivi" sur l'indulgence de la Portiuncola," *Archivum Franciscum Historicum* 74 (1981), 33–76.

71. Raoul Manselli, "La Religiosità Giubilare del 1300: Proposte di un'Interpretazione," *Roma Anno 1300*, 727–730. Gary Dickson, "The Crowd at the feet of Pope Boniface VIII: pilgrimage, crusade and the first Roman Jubilee (1300)," *Journal of Medieval History* 25 (1999), 279–307.

72. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, chap. 2. Frugoni provides a very concise account of the use of indulgences by both Celestine V and Boniface.

73. Although another bull, for which there is only a fifteenth-century partial Spanish copy, granted lavish indulgences, including a plenary indulgence, to pilgrims going to the Holy Land in 1300. Demaray, *The Invention of Dante's Commedia*, 38–39.

74. Stefaneschi, *De centesimo*, 300: "Anceps et pene extra opinionis fidem de proximo tunc futuro centesimo quem millesimum trecentesium pre foribus occurrentium morabamur, ad romanum pontificem delatus rumor advenerat, qui tantum eius fore anni vim ut ipso Roman ad principis apostolorum Petri basilicam pergentes omnium plenissimam peccaminum dilutionem sortirentur, polliceter."

75. Dickson, "The Crowd at the feet of Pope Boniface VIII," 291; Bagliani, "Il Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII," 176.

76. C. Frugoni, *Due Papi*, chap. 3, *passim*.

77. "... quod omnes illi qui venerunt ad indulgentiam concessam per eum et mortui sunt in via vel in Urbe, numero dierum taxato in ipsa indulgentia nondum decurso, plenam indulgentiam consequantur ... quod omnes illi qui arripuerunt iter ad istam indulgentiam animo complendi, eam et iusto impedimento impediti, vel non pervenerunt vel pervenientes non compleverunt, eandem plenam indulgentiam consequantur." For the full text of this bull, see *Bullarium Anni Sancti*, 35–36.

78. Stefaneschi, *De centesimo*, 305: "ad tantam Sancti Spiritus influentiam qua peccatorum omnium tabes abstergitur."

79. Stefaneschi, *De centesimo*, 301.

80. Stefaneschi, *De centesimo*, 313–314.

81. Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, (Florence: il Magheri, 1823), vol. 3, 51 (bk. 8, chap. 36).

82. *Chronicle of Bury St. Edmunds, 1212–1301*, ed. and trans. A. Gransden (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1964), 155.

83. Giovanni Monaco, *Extravagantes Communes*, London, 1570, 1.IV, tot. 9, c. 35 v: "Per istam indulgentiam, que vere penitentibus et confessis conceditur, duplex indulgentia, culpe videlicet et pene habetur, et ideo congrue non in quinquagesimo, qui simplicem remissionem denotat, sed in centesimo conceditur, qui duplicem continet iubileum," cited by Bagliani, "Il Giubileo di Bonifacio VIII," 178, 182, and n.40.

84. Armour, *The Door of Purgatory*, 153, 164.

85. Throughout the year, however, Boniface, in a variety of ways, softened the rigor of the prescribed stations. Bagliani, 178–182; see note 2 above also.

86. Armour, *The Door of Purgatory*, 148; Pero Tafur, *Andancas e Viajes*, ed. M. Jimenez de la Espada (Coleccion de Libros Espanoles Raros o Curiosos, 8), Madrid, 1874, 28; G. Rucellai, "Della bellezza e anticaglia di Roma," in Valentini-Zucchetti, *Codice topografico della citta di Roma* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1953), 4:405–06.

87. *The Stations of Rome* (in verse from the Vernon Ms, ab. 1370 A.D.), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: EETS, 1867, rpt. 1969), 3–31.

88. Bagliani, 182.

89. Julian Gardner, "Boniface VIII as a Patron of Sculpture," *Roma Anno 1300*, 513–527.

90. This angel is seated on a threshold of diamond rock, emphasizing to the reader how sure, confident and adamant was the position of the angel. The posture of being seated, besides symbolizing sureness and implying an eternal dwelling place, also contrasts with the chair of St. Peter/the cathedra of the pope. See, for example, Arnolfo di Cambio's well-known sculpture of St. Peter seated.

91. Amerindo Camilli, "La bolla giubilare di Bonifacio VIII: le indulgenze per i defunti e il ritardo di Casella," *Studi danteschi* 30 (1951), 207–209.

92. St. Gregory the Great, *Liber VI*, cap. 2, 33 [Migne, PL, 79.439], cited in Oscar D. Watkins, *A History of Penance* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1961), vol. 2, 521–22 and 571. Ohlmann, "St. Bonaventure and the Power of the Keys," *passim*.

93. "E quando fuor ne' cardini distorti / li spigoli di quella regge sacra, / che di metallo son sonanti e forti, / non ruggiò sì né si mostrò sì acra / Tarpea, come tolto le fu il buono / Metello, per che poi rimase macra" (*Purg.* 9.133–138).

## Echoes of Andromache in *Inferno* X

JOSEPH LUZZI

**T**he critical literature on *Inferno* X, one of the most studied cantos in the *Commedia*, tends to focus either on the psychological complexities of the Pilgrim's encounter with the ghost of his *primo amico*'s father, Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti, or on the linguistic misunderstanding that transpires during this dialogue—a *malinteso* with, of course, profound theological implications.<sup>1</sup> Stimulated by the biographical and contextual criticism of the Romantics, pioneering interpretations by Francesco De Sanctis and Erich Auerbach helped initiate a parallel line of readings that focuses on the canto's historical and political aspects, especially in the prophecy of Dante's exile by the unforgettable Farinata degli Uberti, a character emblematic of Dante's surging "realism" and genius for dramatic effect.<sup>2</sup> The prominence of the canto in the criticism is understandable, given its privileged access to such defining elements of Dante's writing as palinode and autobiographical reflection, the tension between secular and spiritual concerns, and the abiding question of Florence. Notwithstanding the attention devoted to the Virgilian subtext of *Inferno* X (especially in the commentary tradition),<sup>3</sup> the scholarship has not to my knowledge produced a sustained treatment of the canto's allusion to Andromache's dialogue with Aeneas at Buthrotum in *Aeneid* III (cited below), an exchange that permeates Cavalcante's tortured inquiries about his son Guido's whereabouts and impacts the Pilgrim's entire journey through the *al di là*.

piangendo disse: "Se per questo cieco  
carcere vai per altezza d'ingegno,  
mio figlio ov'è? e perché non è teco?"

(*Inf.* X, 58–60)

“[ . . . ] vivisne? aut, si lux alma recessit,  
Hector ubi est?” dixit, lacrimasque effudit et ominem  
implevit clamore locum. [ . . . ]”

(*Aen.* III, 311–13)

(“Are you [Aeneas] alive? If the light of life has left you, [ . . . ] [w]here is Hector?” As she [Andromache] spoke she burst into tears and her cries filled the grove.)<sup>4</sup>

I will argue that Dante’s *translatio* of Andromache’s voice via Cavalcante triggers an elaborate thematic construction in which the Pilgrim—like Aeneas confronted with the task of founding a new Rome and leaving behind the false “little Troy” (*parva Troia*) of *Aeneid* III—overcomes the personal, philosophical, and literary-historical nostalgia elicited by his meeting with the Florentine patriarchs.<sup>5</sup> By situating Guido Cavalcanti’s notorious “disdegno” (63) in the subtext of Andromache’s effusive tears, “lacrimasque effudit” (312), Dante connects the Pilgrim’s spiritual ascent with the formal exigencies of the epic genre, the historical considerations of Roman imperial ideology, and the theological dimensions of his impending exile as prophesied by Farinata. In a manner that anticipates Andromache’s subsequent haunting of Western literary history, the *Inferno*’s lyric inscription of the *parva Troia* episode shows how the private or hidden affective qualities of a literary allusion can challenge and even reverse the more public, explicit, and superficially referential elements of the source text, however prestigious and paradigmatic.

The critical lacuna on the legacy of Andromache in *Inferno* X comes as no surprise, for her voice resurfaces in an extremely mediated fashion: as an approximate auditory fragment or echo, as John Hollander describes the term in his study of the figure.

[Echo is] a way of alluding that is inherently poetic, rather than expository, and that makes new metaphor rather than learned gestures. [ . . . ] Poets [ . . . ] seem to echo earlier voices with full or suppressed consciousness that, and of how, they are so doing, by accident or by plan, but with the same shaping spirit that gives form to tropes of thought and feeling. Whether these figurative echoes constitute a kind of underground cipher-message for the attentive poetic ear, or perhaps a private melody or undersong hummed during composition by the poet as a spell or charm, matters less [ . . . ] than that the revisionary power of poetic allusive echo generates new figuration.<sup>6</sup>

This notion of echo, as an allusive practice that aurally gestures in the direction of a source yet simultaneously establishes its freedom from origin by generating new formal and thematic structures, epitomizes the revisionary process at work in Dante's recapitulation of the Virgilian subtext in *Inferno* X.<sup>7</sup> The voicing of Andromache's lament by Cavalcante depends on a figurative and linguistic repetition, whereby "the repeated sound is not only contingent upon the [source], but in some way a qualified version of it (a metaphor of the decaying dynamics of successive echoes, perhaps)."<sup>8</sup> In *Inferno* X, the transition from Virgil's Latin to Dante's Tuscan further mediates the sonic distancing inherent in poetic echo. The verbal refraction of Andromache's voice represents but one of many instances in which Dante employs an aural reference meant both to evoke a predecessor text and obscure or manipulate that source's presence and meaning. In *Inferno* V, for example, when Francesca repeats to Dante the celebrated Guinizzellian figure of the *cor gentil* overcome by passion ("Amor, ch'al cor gentil ratto s'apprende"; "Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona"; and "Amor condusse noi ad una morte"),<sup>9</sup> the sentiments expressed in the anaphoric construction and their accompanying images actually undermine Francesca's would-be defense of her adultery, for her words represent a sinful notion of love from the poem's Christian perspective. Francesca is not "citing" Guinizzelli, but rather loosely recapitulating any number of lyrical representations of *amor* by the Stilnovisti (especially Cavalcanti), a move that allows Dante to engage in literary-historical reflection of a most intimate and, given the unyielding moral economy of the *Commedia*, stringent kind.<sup>10</sup> The unstable echoing lines in Francesca's discourse on love, with their implication of a lack of agency and incantatory evocation of overwhelming emotion, recall the figurative body of that same Lord of Love who haunted and daunted the Dante of the earlier *Vita Nuova*. The confluence of metaphor, precept, and theme in Francesca's ersatz allusion to Guinizzelli's *cor gentil* thus operates on a range of sensorial, cognitive, and affective planes, for it is aural (spoken by Francesca and heard by the Pilgrim), textual (written and cited by the Poet), and indeed *felt* by the Pilgrim (he swoons after Francesca's speech, arguably because of his own guilty hand in composing the kind of poetry reflected in her misplaced passion). However one wishes to gloss Francesca's Guinizzellian misprision, it is plausible to argue that the scene's dramatic possibilities derive in great part from the resonance of a purposefully



ambivalent echo in which Dante's vaunted powers of synthesis assume a decidedly acoustic dimension.

Whereas composition generally entailed an overt display of allusive skill for such later writers as Petrarch and his fellow literary humanists, Dante faced less or at least a different kind of pressure in this regard. From his earliest compositions in the Stil Novo to the *Commedia* of his poetic maturity, Dante does of course weave a rich intertextual tapestry of ancient and medieval authors—an intertextuality laced, moreover, with tireless allusions to his own work. Yet, to a greater degree than Petrarch, Dante's rewriting of other texts quite often seeks, for moral or religious reasons, to eclipse the source or reduce it to an ethereal and shadowy presence, fittingly enough in the case of the supremely ectoplastic Andromache. The ambiguities of the spectral Andromache are intensified in *Inferno* X by another ghostly presence with whom Dante also grapples in this canto of settling accounts (albeit provisionally): Guido Cavalcanti.<sup>11</sup> By locating the Andromachean lament for Hector in Cavalcante's plea for his son, Dante suggests the Oedipal and epic-like pitch of his own unresolved tension vis-à-vis his initial *maître à penser*, Guido. One is tempted to posit that Dante's tortuous allusion to Andromache represents a defensive invocation of his first poetic mentor (Guido) through a version of the anxious, antithetical model of influence described by Bloom: i.e., that mode of referring to a predecessor poet by avoiding explicit reference and masking the textual ligature or debt in a web of evasions, false leads, even silence.<sup>12</sup> At the risk of acquiescing to a critical anachronism, I believe there is something to be gained by this Freudian line of interpretation; yet one does not need modern theory to diagnose the canto's psychological pressures, since Dante renders these symptoms fully manifest through an extended intertextual dialogue with Virgilian and Stilnovistic sources.

The subtext of Dante's allusive anxiety in *Inferno* X is one of the more poignant episodes in the *Aeneid*. With the flames of his lost city left behind, Aeneas lands in Carthage and recounts to Dido how he left Troy in tears ("lacrimans," *Aen.* III, 10) and as an exile ("exsul," 11). He narrates his false starts and failed attempts to resurrect his city, first at the eponymous Aeneadae, where the specter of the slain Polydorus emerges to warn away the Trojans; later in Crete, where a dream vision of the Penates once again disperses the castaways with a prophecy of their true destination: "est locus, Hesperiam Grai cognomine dicunt, / terra antiqua, potens armis atque ubere glabrae; / [ . . . ] hae nobis propriae sedes"

(163–64, 166–67): “There is a place—Greeks call it Hesperia—an ancient land, strong in arms and in the richness of her soil. [ . . . ] This is our true home.” Fortified with this promise, the Trojans set sail in search of a second Troy in what is now the Italian Peninsula. Blown off course, the ships eventually deter into the coast of Epirus and the city of Buthrotum. “Here,” Aeneas recounts to Dido, “there came to our ears a story almost beyond belief” (“Hic incredibilis rerum fama occupat auris,” 294)—a tale whose emphatic doubling and mix of the familiar and spectral bring to mind elements of the Freudian uncanny. Buthrotum, it turns out, is a city under the rule of Priam’s son Helenus, who has taken Andromache, former wife of the great Hector, as his queen and assumed control of the kingdom (and the bride) previously under the dominion of the Greek king Pyrrhus after the Trojan War. So Aeneas discovers Andromache returned to that same family that housed her before the calamities of war with Greece, but her restoration, he learns, is anything but felicitous.<sup>13</sup> The land he has stumbled upon is a copy of his lost home, peopled by old friends and with a citadel modeled on the Trojan Pergamum. Initially, the reproduced homeland fills Aeneas with joy. He embraces the threshold of the Scaean Gate, and his fellow Trojans enjoy their twin city (“simil urbe,” 352) and attend a welcoming feast. Yet a funereal atmosphere pervades the city, to which Aeneas refers with the pejorative tag of “parva Troia” (“little Troy”). In her unstinting grief and obsession with the past, Andromache seems more dead than alive, and Buthrotum’s Xanthus River itself is “dry” (“arentem,” 350). Virgil refashions the Trojan *polis* into a kind of necropolis, a city consecrated to the past and memories of the dead. Eventually, Aeneas will have to acknowledge the pact between Juno and Jupiter that there can be no *Troia rediviva*, and that he will perforce continue to seek not a second Troy but a new Rome, which for all its glory and regenerative force will always remind him of a former life lost. Aeneas will recreate the old Troy in the new Rome in part by a *translatio imperii* of a literal kind, by carrying the Penates into Alba Longa. Following Maurizio Bettini’s suggestive rhetorical reading of the episode (“Ghosts of Exile,” 29–30), one could describe Aeneas’s political translation in terms of metonymy: the Penates are representative parts that serve the subsequent reconstitution of a larger whole, the Trojan *Italia*. Andromache, on the other hand, will resort to a less successful, more metaphorical act of translation. Her *parva Troia* merely approximates the original city

by reproducing it through an impoverished analogy. Employing the painful grammar of immigration, Virgil portrays an Andromache unable to release herself from the claims of the past and the material world that houses it, and so she spends her days marking time backward and futilely rebuilding a domestic sphere history has undone.

This Virgilian scene and its themes have proved resurgent in writers ranging from Dante and Yeats to the French authors Racine, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Roubaud.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Greene even suggests that Virgil's creation of the *parva Troia* episode and its stubborn resonance in the *Aeneid* embodies a quintessential "tragic anachronism" of Western literary history.

The *Aeneid* displays an awareness of tragic anachronism that Virgil's culture did not formulate discursively, and as the central classic of Western civilization it inscribed this awareness, this ambivalent sympathy, upon our whole tradition. It authorized the regret that stems from turning one's back, as the poem as a whole turns its back. Andromache and Helenus are signs for the dominance of that Homeric past from which Roman epic struggles to free itself, but not without misgivings, and these misgivings have remained to define our intercourse with our past.<sup>15</sup>

Particularly instructive is Greene's observation that the political and cultural burdens either narrated or anticipated by the Homeric *Ur-text*—in the above case, the dominion of the conquering Greeks over Andromache and the Trojans—mirror the formal challenges faced by Homer's heirs, especially Virgil. Homeric epic provided Virgil with a master narrative about heroism, homecoming, and the waxing and waning of great civilizations; from Homer Virgil was also able to wrest a poetic protocol whereby a physical space is consecrated in the name of the transcendental ideals that sanction its ideological underpinnings. The voice of Andromache, however, surfaces above the din of the epic's historical struggles to remind each successive generation of readers that, in this literary genre as in life, there are winners and there are losers.<sup>16</sup> In order to advance the claims of the *Aeneid*, Virgil circumscribes the voice of Andromache—and, by extension, the architectural echoes binding Buthrotum to the razed city of Troy—in a remote outpost whose gravitational melancholy the agent of historical progress, Aeneas, hastens to exit. The resilient voice of Andromache and her failed replication of Troy appear in the *Aeneid* as a ghostly trace that the Virgilian master narrative suppresses yet never wholly eliminates nor comfortably absorbs.<sup>17</sup>

Several centuries later, Virgil's disciple Dante would face a similar challenge from the phantoms of epic inheritance, imperial ideology, and nostalgic exile in *Inferno* X, a canto that scholars (however divided over issues related to Dante's exchange with Cavalcante) generally acknowledge to be one of the more figuratively dense in Dante's poetry.<sup>18</sup> Andromache's image of the sweet light in her aforementioned lines from *Aen.* III ("aut, si *lux alma* recessit, / Hector ubi est?" 311–12) resurfaces as the photographic negative of Cavalcante's description of Dis as a blind prison ("Se per questo *cieco* / *carcere* vai per altezza d'ingegno, / mio figlio ov'è?").<sup>19</sup> Cavalcante's further questioning of the Pilgrim—"non fiere li occhi suoi [Guido's] lo dolce lume?" 69—also echoes both Andromache's "*lux alma* recessit" and her later query "quid puer Ascanius? superatne et vescitur aura?" (III, 339: "What about your [Aeneas's] boy Ascanius? Is he alive and breathing the air?"). The city of Dis in which Dante encounters the Epicureans is, like Buthrotum, an urban conglomeration of painful recollection and incurable nostalgia. Here, where the Epicureans ("che l'anima col corpo morta fanno," *Inf.* X, 15) have their burial place, Dante encounters open graves, similar to Aeneas's discovery of Andromache by an empty grave for Hector in the *parva Troia*. In *Inferno* X, the emphasis on the physicality of the sinners' spiritual poverty recalls the comparable fate of Andromache, who cannot transcend her warrior-husband's corporeal death and, in Epicurean-like fashion, views the world *sub specie mortis*. However macabre the respective scenes, Aeneas and the Pilgrim desire the same thing: to speak to people from their city. Dante's wish to see Florentines, which he initially hides from Virgil, is not frustrated. In keeping with the canto's aural focus, the magnanimous Farinata hears the Pilgrim's accent and greets him as a fellow citizen ("O Tosco"), then immediately inquires about his ancestors.<sup>20</sup> Farinata's genealogical rhetoric finds a melancholic echo in the miserable figure of his in-law Cavalcante, a mirror image of Andromache. Like her, Cavalcante is weeping ("piangendo," 58) and looking for another ("Dintorno mi guardò," 55). Just as Andromache sees Hector everywhere, especially in Aeneas, so too does Cavalcante discern his son Guido in all parts, particularly in Dante ("mio figlio ov'è? e perché non è teco?" 60).

As is well known, it has not been definitively established just whom ("cui") Guido disdained ("ebbe a disdegno"), for Dante has—perhaps purposefully—left the referent of the pronoun in line 63 unclear.<sup>21</sup> Beyond the vagueness of the "cui," the Pilgrim's choice of the past tense in

“ebbe a disdegno” troubles Cavalcante, who interprets these words to mean that his son Guido no longer lives. By putting the word “dolce” in the mouth of Guido’s father Cavalcante and simultaneously echoing Virgil’s Andromachean lament (especially her mention of the “lux alma” in line 311), Dante thereby associates the Dolce Stil Novo of Cavalcanti et al. with a categorical materialism that reduces existence to an Epicurean worldview engulfed in *Inferno* X by the funereal atmosphere of the *parva Troia* subtext.<sup>22</sup> Of equal importance, the passage feminizes Cavalcante in order to emphasize the unmanly impotence of his grief, a gesture in the direction of the uncontrollable passions of the same Stilnovistic lyric that the *Commedia* associates with, among other things, the sinful carnality and excessive ardor of Francesca in *Inferno* V. At the same time as Cavalcante’s words evoke the issue of gender, they also signal the disappearance or occlusion of such matters of identity, for the blanketing ambiguity of his Andromachean lament dematerializes his physical presence in the name of an absent—and, as far as he is concerned, dead—son, just as the Stilnovistic lexicon he cites buckles under the pressure exerted upon it by Dante’s Christian allegory. The overall effect is to spread the reader’s interpretive energies over the range of the four-fold model of exegesis outlined in the Letter to Can Grande, which authorizes references to the literal level (in *Inferno* X, the pathos of the suffering father Cavalcante) to coexist alongside competing and often conflicting moral and theological discourses.<sup>23</sup> If readers of the *Commedia* have learned to read Dante’s poetic construction of *contrapasso* as a system of reified metaphors turned against the sinners themselves, Dante’s contrapuntal echoing of Andromache’s mournful words suggests that the reification reaches inside the verbal tissue of these metaphors and infuses their sonic articulation. Viewed from this rhetorical perspective, the Cavalcante that emerges from *Inferno* X is a literary pastiche comprised of Virgilian and Stilnovistic citations, fragments, and textual allusions, whose operatic pathos Dante exploits in tandem with his manipulation of the vertiginous temporality of the biography of Cavalcante’s son Guido.<sup>24</sup> By implicating Guido in the judgment of his father, Dante, in Aeneas-like fashion, challenges the nostalgia binding him to Florence as he attempts to come to terms with the exile that Farinata later prophesies in the canto. As a whole, *Inferno* X obsessively tropes on the imagery, themes, and words of the dismal Virgilian *parva Troia* in order to debunk any false promise of return by the

Pilgrim to Florence, which in *Inferno* X assumes the form of a moral and historical *parva Florentia*.<sup>25</sup>

Though the various literary séances inspired by the primal scene of Andromache mourning the ghost of Hector in *Aeneid* III may differ from Dante's in nature and theme (see note 12), his rendition of the episode establishes a transhistorical point of reference for later authors as a major post-Virgilian refashioning of Andromache that implicates issues of historical progress, cultural tradition, and literary authority. Virgil's own treatment of Andromache and the *parva Troia* was more an invention than an allusion, and thus an act of literary autonomy with regard to Homeric epic. Neither the razing of Troy nor the failed Trojan replication of the destroyed *patria* appears in Homer, whose poetry moreover does not seem to manifest the preoccupation with authority and cultural belatedness that informs Virgil. Like Virgil, the Dante who invokes Andromache has an explicit epic inheritance that he negotiates partly through his manipulation of the *parva Troia*, a consummate literary symbol of belatedness and distance from origin. Writers in Dante's wake dealt with similar burdens of literary genealogy. For example, Jean Racine observed in the second preface to *Andromaque* that his eponymous protagonist was known primarily as Hector's widow and Astyanax's mother, and that her tears move the audience principally because they are shed for the child of so great a hero.<sup>26</sup> Thus, her abundant weeping—a figurative debt to the Virgilian *lacrimae* in the *parva Troia* episode—attains its full affective impact as the nostalgic invocation of a lost golden age that Andromache herself passively remembers but never actively re-experiences. Yet, for all its pretense of promoting a heroic ethos and the classical unities, Racine's play exhibits qualities that diminish the selfsame atmosphere of antiquity that the author sought to promote in the *Querelle des Anciens et Modernes* surrounding the text's composition. Andromache's forlorn suitor and eventual husband Pyrrhus appears more as a dallying and indecisive lover from what Dryden called the eminently "modern" sentimental stage of Shakespeare than from any warrior-king in, say, Sophocles.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, Hermione's arbitrary cruelty toward Orestes at play's end fails to evoke the workings of fate and codes of justice-retribution that were central to the ancient Greek stage. The brilliance of Racine's *Andromaque*, perhaps against his presumed intentions, seems to lie in an unresolved tension between ancient Greco-Roman and contemporary neoclassical elements that Racine generates through a compelling use of anachronism.

Perhaps the sharpest reworking of themes similar to Dante's re-inscription of Andromache in *Inferno* X appears in an author far removed from the moral absolutes and spiritual certainties of the *Commedia*, Charles Baudelaire. He begins his poem "Le cygne"—the first edition of which carried the epigraph "Falsi Simoentis ad undam" ("[O]n the banks of a [false Trojan] river Simois") from *Aen.* III, 302—with the apostrophe "Andromaque, je pense à vous!" (1).<sup>28</sup> The urgency of the address is felt immediately in the exclamatory opening: we two are one, the voice seems to say, and the narrative presence, in its identification with a bereaved ancient widow, appears deeply out-of-joint with the historical moment. Unlike Aeneas or Dante the Pilgrim, however, the narrator in Baudelaire's poem is in no hurry to depart from the nostalgic funereal rites of his *parva* Paris, the lost medieval section of his beloved city razed by Haussman's modernizing boulevards. In "Le cygne," Andromache's tears have sanctified the stream of the Xanthus, and her "majesté" (3) makes "fertile" (5) the poet's memory, which blossoms forth with a series of reflections on the nature of temporality. Andromache's Troy functions in the narrator's mind as the coveted, unattainable allegory of a beloved "old Paris," now "no more," for "a city, alas, changes more quickly than does a man's heart" ("Le vieux Paris n'est plus [la forme d'une ville / Change plus vite, hélas! que le cœur d'un mortel]," 7–8). In his somber urban elegy, the poet privileges the memory of a symbol, the swan, whose combination of majesty and misery, like the figure of Andromache, extends its associative powers to the poet's imagination.<sup>29</sup> A *signe* as *déplacé* and *déraciné* as the poem's narrator himself, the magnificent white-plumed "cygne" now finds itself bathed in dust and reduced to parched wandering ("Sur le sol raboteux traînait son blanc plumage. / Près d'un ruisseau sans eau la bête ouvrant le bec / Baignait nerveusement ses ailes dans la poudre" [19–21]). Filled with memories of its lost native lake, the exiled beast emits the elegaic cry: "Eau, quand donc pleuvras-tu? quand tonneras-tu, foudre?" (23). The creature's dried, dusty environs, Baudelaire's version of the Virgilian *Xanthus arens*, serves as a "sad mirror" ("triste miroir" [2]) of the poet's alienated consciousness, which fails to move in sync with history and adapt itself to change: "Paris change! mais rien dans ma mélancolie / N'a bougé!" (29–30). Dante, of course, could never accept the inertia and marginality of Baudelaire's *flâneur*. The Pilgrim moves away from any figurative *Arnus arens* of the false "second Florence" in *Inferno* X and toward the heavenly city of *Paradiso*, a fusion of the secular and sacred

Rome and the urban correlative to his shadow selves, the Aeneas and St. Paul of *Inferno* II, 32 (“Io non Enëa, io non Paulo sono”). He also moves forward from the death of Guido Cavalcanti—and the self-fragmenting “Epicurean” Stilnovistic lyrics that shadow the invocation of his former *primo amico* in *Inferno* X—to the theologically inflected encyclopedic poetry that makes the *Commedia* possible. Thus, in his treatment of the Andromachean source, Dante stands closer to Virgilian epic and is more “ancient” than the more paralyzed, self-conscious, and self-referential lyrical representation of the *parva Troia* by Baudelaire. Yet there are elements in Dante that suggest the proximity of the literary subtext of *Inferno* X to the issues raised in “Le cygne.” When Virgil’s Aeneas bids farewell to Andromache and Helenus at Buthrotum, the official language of his valediction (cited below) compels the reader to guess at his emotions, for, as we have been told countless times by authorities ranging from Voltaire to Lukács, the epic hero’s private thoughts tend to cede pride of place to his public actions.

vivite felices, quibus est fortuna peracta  
iam sua: nos alia ex aliis in fata vocamur.  
vobis parta quies:

(*Aen.* III, 493–95)

(“Live on and enjoy the blessing of heaven. Your destiny has been accomplished. But we are called from fate to fate. Your rest is won.”)

Like the above, *Inferno* X obliges the reader to decode the raw emotions of nostalgia, likely shaded by guilt and grief, in both the Pilgrim and Poet; but, as in Baudelaire’s “Le cygne,” the locus of the canto’s affective pressure derives as much from its foregrounding of a choice literary subtext in *Aeneid* III as from the narration of the events at hand. Though the melancholy in *Inferno* X seems more mobile and protean than the fixed *tristesse* in “Le cygne” (“rien dans ma mélancolie / N’a bougé!”), Dante follows Baudelaire in using Andromache’s voice to express a crisis of conscience and historical dislocation devoid of the imperial certainties (however costly) that sustain the *Aeneid*.

As a whole, Dante’s virtuoso refashioning of the Virgilian source reveals how a pressing cultural, intellectual, and spiritual question—in Dante’s case, his inheritance as a Christian poet of the Virgilian epic genre and its pagan, imperial associations—can be subjected to the revisionary



power of poetic echo, a practice that Dante employs to subvert many of the governing principles of the same source he aurally invokes. The referencing of Andromache's Latin in Cavalcante's Tuscan speech testifies to the capacity of figurative discourse to transcend the limitations and restrictions of the historical framework that surrounds it. For, by giving his ear to the mournful words of a defeated Trojan queen, Dante collapses the temporal distance separating the *parva Troia* from its Florentine urban counterpart in Dis and, as a consequence, sets their oceanic cultural and historical differences into a dialogue that informs both the overall design of the *Commedia* and the nature of the Christian faith that subtends it. In so doing, he echoes a voice of regret that, for some two thousand years now, has been a touchstone in Western literature's ongoing dialectic with the wages of historical progress.

Readers of the *Commedia* have long been accustomed to the strategies by which the poem's elaborate and unshakeable Christian allegorical framework eventually explicates and assigns meaning or value to what at first appear to be the inscrutable details, questions, and issues of the Pilgrim's journey. This essay has endeavored to establish that the compass of the *Commedia*'s typological structure extends to the aural dimension, through a process in which the seemingly inchoate verbal refractions and permutations of one of the *Commedia*'s many subtexts ultimately resonate with meanings never voiced within their initial context. It is a testament to the restless sweep of Dante's imagination—and to the tuning of his poetic ear—that the often radical otherness of his disparate sources can be transfigured in such a way as to enhance their aesthetic effect, even when their forms and themes are shaped by what is in some cases (and certainly for Virgil) an alien typology. The interplay between citation and "riscrittura" that defines Dante's treatment of the *parva Troia* episode in *Inferno* X calls to mind the words of T. S. Eliot on the praxis of allusion.

You cannot effectively "borrow" an image, unless you borrow also, or have spontaneously, something like the feeling which prompted the original image. An "image," in itself, is like dream symbolism, is only vigorous in relation to the feelings out of which it issues, in the relation of word to the flesh. You are entitled to take it for your own purposes in so far as your fundamental purposes are akin to those of the one who is, for you, the author of the phrase, the inventor of the image; or if you take it for other purposes then your purposes must be consciously and *pointedly* diverse from those of the author, and the contrast is very much to the point; you may not take it merely because it is a good phrase or a lovely image.<sup>30</sup>

In keeping with Eliot's prescriptions, Cavalcante's voicing of the Virgilian subtext to express his paternal anguish meshes with Andromache's pained queries about the ghost of her late husband—hence Dante's capture of the visceral sentiment of the original as it links “word to flesh.” Moreover, whereas the *parva Troia* episode in the *Aeneid* makes Andromache and her artificial Troy a sacrificial altar upon which personal memory must give way to the public recollection of imperial destiny, the *Commedia* can know no such collective certainties (thus Dante's “pointed” difference from source). When Dante exits the circle of the Epicureans, he bids farewell to a *parva Florentia* and is left to envision an alternate version of that same Roman Empire that Aeneas steadfastly and successfully pursued after abandoning his second Troy. The Pilgrim, one could say, gains the self and loses the world as his journey through the afterlife increases the momentum of its celestial ascent. Aeneas, avatar par excellence of historical *gravitas*, moved in an opposite and more immanent direction, and so the *Aeneid* ends—with a selfless hero's loss of identity through the brutal murder of Turnus—where Dante's journey, in the dark wood, begins.

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## NOTES

1. Readings of the canto consulted in preparation for this essay include Michele Barbi, “Il canto di Farinata,” *Studi Danteschi* 8 (1924), 87–109; Bruno Nardi, “L'averroismo del ‘primo amico’ di Dante,” *Studi Danteschi* 25 (1940), 43–79; Guido Mazzoni, “Il disdegno di Guido (*Inf.*, X, 62–63),” in *Almae luces, malae cruces: Studii danteschi* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1941), 213–19; Antonino Pagliaro, “Il disdegno di Guido,” in *Saggi di critica semantica* (Messina-Florence: D'Anna, 1953), 355–79; Mario Casella, “Il canto X dell'*Inferno*,” *Studi Danteschi* 33 (1955), 35–42; Charles S. Singleton, “*Inferno* X: Guido's Disdain,” *MLN* 77 (1962), 49–65; Arsenio Frugoni, “Il canto X dell'*Inferno*,” in *Nuove letture dantesche* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968), 261–83; Anthony K. Cassell, “Dante's Farinata and the Image of the *Arca*,” *Yale Italian Studies* 1 (1977), 335–70; John Freccero, “Ironia e mimesi: Il disdegno di Guido,” in *Dante e la Bibbia*, ed. G. Barblan (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 41–54; and Robert M. Durling, “Canto X: Farinata and Cavalcante,” in *Lectura Dantis: Inferno*, ed. A. Mandelbaum, A. Oldcorn, and C. Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 136–49.

2. For a representative expression of this critical perspective, see Auerbach: “We cannot but admire Farinata and weep with Cavalcanti. What actually moves us is not that God has damned them, but that the one is unbroken and the other mourns so heartrendingly for his son and the sweetness of the light. [ . . . ] The image of man eclipses the image of god. Dante's work made man's Christian-figural being a reality, and destroyed it in the very process of realizing it” (“Farinata and Cavalcante,” *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. W. Trask [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953], 200, 202). In a related vein, De Sanctis observes that the “grandi

figure poetiche" and "personaggi eroici" in Hell, including Farinata and Cavalcanti, lead the reader out of "astrattezze mistiche e scolastiche" and to the "possesso della realtà" (*Storia della letteratura italiana*, ed. G. Contini [Turin: UTET, 1989], 234). De Sanctis's influential essay "Il Farinata di Dante" first appeared in *Nuova antologia* (May, 1869); see "Farinata," in *De Sanctis on Dante*, ed. and trans. J. Rossi and A. Galpin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), 53–86. For discussion of *Inferno* X in its political and historical contexts, see Benedetto Croce, *La poesia di Dante*, 7th ed. (Bari: Laterza, 1952), 76–77. See also John Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996): "[Dante's] six years of active involvement in Florentine politics only served to drive home the lesson of the mutability of human affairs as exemplified in his native city. It is therefore not surprising that the poet of the *Comedy* chose two thirteenth-century Florentines—Farinata degli Uberti (d. 1264) and Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti (d. before 1280)—to illustrate the truth of Christ's warning that 'every city or household divided against itself shall fall' (Matthew 12:5)" (8).

3. In his sixteenth-century commentary on *Inf.* X, 52–63, Daniello describes Guido Cavalcanti as a "dottissimo & eccellente Filosofo," observing that "di Costui [Guido] dimanda il padre à Dante, lodando il figliuolo, dicendo che se gli era conceduto l'andar per l'Inferno da grandissimo ingegno, doveva esser seco ancora il suo Guido: come Virg. in persona d'Andromaca ad Enea di suo marito, nel 3. dell'Eneid. Nate Dea? vivisne, aut, si lux alma recessit: Hector ubi est?" (*L'esposizione di Bernardino Daniello da Lucca sopra la Comedia di Dante*, ed. R. Hollander and J. Schnapp with K. Brownlee and N. Vickers [Hanover, New Jersey: University Press of New England, 1989], 56). See also the commentaries by N. Tommaseo, ed., *La Comedia di Dante Alighieri col commento di N. Tommaseo* (Naples: Cioffi, 1839), 125; G. Fallani, ed., *La Divina Commedia: Inferno* (Messina-Florence: D'Anna, 1965), 111, and C. Singleton, ed., *The Divine Comedy*, 6 vols. (1970–75; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989–91), II, 153.

4. References are taken from, respectively, Dante, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. G. Petrocchi, 4 vols. (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67); and *The Aeneid of Virgil: Books 1–6*, ed. R. D. Williams (1972; London: St. Martin's Press, 1992); trans. D. West, *The Aeneid: A New Prose Translation* (New York: Penguin, 1991).

5. For a biographical discussion of Dante's overcoming of nostalgia and his abandonment of the idea of returning to Florence through a military conspiracy with his fellow exiles, see Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Life of Dante," *The Cambridge Companion to Dante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 9.

6. John Hollander, *The Figure of Echo: A Mode of Allusion in Milton and After* (1981; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), ix. For general studies of allusion, see William Irwin, "What Is an Allusion?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59 (2001), 287–97; and Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

7. Dante's persistent echoing of Virgil's *Aeneid*, at once the *Commedia*'s privileged literary source as well as its textual foil, recalls Thomas Greene's notion of "heuristic imitation," i.e., an author's thematizing of the relationship of his own work to that same source that serves as literary model or touchstone (*The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Literature* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982], 40). See the discussion of Dante's allusive strategy vis-à-vis Virgil in R. Jacoff and J. Schnapp, eds., "Introduction," in *The Poetry of Allusion: Virgil and Ovid in Dante's "Commedia"* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 2–5.

8. Hollander, *Echo* 3.

9. *Inf.* V, 100, 103, 106.

10. See Teodolinda Barolini, "Dante and Cavalcanti (On Making Distinctions in Matters of Love): *Inferno* V in Its Lyric Context," *Dante Studies* 116 (1998), 31–63.

11. For studies of Dante's relationship to Cavalcanti, see Mario Marti, "Cavalcanti, Guido," *Enciclopedia dantesca*, ed. U. Bosco, 6 vols. (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970–78), I, 891–96, esp. his mention of "talune note cavalcantiane" in Dante's poetry (892); Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Body of Beatrice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 69–90, esp. the discussion of Cavalcanti's "phantasmology of the self" (70), which makes him the perfect analogue for the Andromache who haunts *Inferno* X; and Gianfranco Contini, "Cavalcanti in Dante," *Un'idea di Dante: Saggi danteschi*, 3rd ed. (Turin: Einaudi, 2001), 143–57. For an analysis of the

philosophical underpinnings of Cavalcanti's presence in *Inferno* X, see Maria Corti, *Dante a un nuovo crocevia* (Florence: Sansoni, 1981), 77–85. A study of the legacy of both Cavalcanti and Guinizzelli in Dante's poetry is in Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the "Comedy"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 123–153.

12. See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), *passim*.

13. Maurizio Bettini describes the marriage of Andromache and Helenus as a "levirate," the inheritance by a younger brother of his dead sibling's wife, and thus more a transfer of ownership than an actual marriage. See "Ghosts of Exile: Doubles and Nostalgia in Vergil's *parva Troia* (*Aeneid* 3.294ff.)," trans. L. Gibbs-Wichrowska, *Classical Antiquity* 16 (1997), 8–33. Emphasizing the spectral nature of Andromache's marital status, Bettini notes that through her levirate she "has in some sense reproduced her own past," and that this second marriage is an emblem for the diminished *parva Troia* she inhabits (11).

14. Literary debts to the scene with Andromache in *Aeneid* III appear in Jean Racine, *Andromaque* (1667); Charles Baudelaire, "Le cygne" (1860); Stéphane Mallarmé, "Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui" (1885); W. B. Yeats, "No Second Troy" (1910); and Jacques Roubaud, *La forme d'une ville change plus vite, hélas, que le cœur des humains* (1999). Though Mallarmé's poem does not allude directly to Andromache, it recalls the displaced figure of Baudelaire's swan and the erasure of the past in the modernizing city, and also draws on the rhetoric of temporal exile and dislocation typical of the Virgilian, Dantesque, and Baudelairean versions of Andromache. Yeats's unattainable "second Troy" evokes the breakdown of the "mythical method" associated with the high Modernism of such authors as T. S. Eliot and manifests a nostalgic effect similar to the one at work in Dante's and Baudelaire's refashioning of Virgil. Roubaud draws the title of his collection of poems nearly verbatim from a line in "Le cygne" and, like Mallarmé (and in a manner akin to the Virgilian *Ur-text*), exploits the theme of a modern city's erasure of its own past.

15. Thomas Greene, "History and Anachronism," in *Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies*, ed. G. S. Morson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 205–220, p. 211.

16. For a study of the epic genre as a dialectic between, on the one hand, the Virgilian tradition of conquest and empire and, on the other, narratives of the defeated and republican liberty (e.g., Lucan's *Pharsalia*), see David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Quint notes that Aeneas's abandonment of Andromache's city and the historical memories it embodies contributes to a transition in genre in which the first half of the *Aeneid*, reminiscent of Odysseus's wanderings, eventually passes into its more properly "epic" second half, modeled on the *Iliad* but with the critical difference that the heirs of Troy emerge victorious (58–59, 64–66).

17. Freud employs an urban metaphor similar to the *parva Troia* to exemplify his theory of the "memory-trace," by comparing mental life—in which "nothing which has once been formed can perish," and whose repressed memories can ultimately resurface independent of conscious intent—to the ruins of civilization's great cities. According to Freud, if Rome were not a physical but a "psychical entity," the palaces of the Caesars would rise alongside those of the Renaissance and the Fascists (*Civilization and Its Discontents*, ed. and trans. J. Strachey [1961; New York: W. W. Norton, 1989], 16, 18). The concepts and metaphors of the Freudian memory-trace recall the resurgence of the *parva Troia* in both *Aeneid* III and *Inferno* X, for the episode of memory represented by Andromache and her diminished "second Troy" reappears as an unexpected challenge that a putatively preemptive ideal (Rome's imperial mission for Virgil and a Christian, anti-Stilnovistic poetics for Dante) represses yet never completely erases.

18. In addition to the canto's literary substrata, scholars have actively identified its many biblical allusions: see, for example, Durling ("Canto X" 143) for discussion of Cavalcante's question about his son ("mio figlio ov' è?" 60) as a parallel to God's query to Cain about Abel in Genesis 4:9 ("Ubi est Abel frater tuus?"); and Freccero's claim that the subtext of Augustine's *Confessions* VII (esp. in the phrase *dedignantur ab eo discere* ["they disdain to learn from him [Christ]"]) permeates the "ebbe a disdegno" of *Inf.* X, 63 ("Ironia e mimesi," 48).

19. *Inf.* X, 58–60 (my italics). For discussion of the term “cieco carcere” in the context of Dante’s relationship to the *Aeneid*, see Michael C. J. Putnam, “Virgil’s *Inferno*,” in *Poetry of Allusion*, 94–112.

20. *Inf.* X, 22. Auerbach underscores the canto’s auralty by discussing the vocative “O” from Farinata’s greeting to the Pilgrim as an example of Dante’s use of the “O thou who” construction from ancient epic (“Farinata and Cavalcante” 179). Auerbach also notes the sonic contrast between “the regularly constructed clauses which come to the listener [from Farinata] while he is still conscious of the irregular and plaintively thronging questions of the other [Cavalcante],” and raises the possibility that Dante may have modeled Cavalcante’s words on Andromache’s mournful encounter with Aeneas in *Aeneid* III (181). See also Barbi, “Farinata” 95 for a discussion of the affective impact on Farinata of the Pilgrim’s voice (which represents to Farinata “la voce della sua Firenze”).

21. From the earliest commentaries on the *Commedia* to well into the nineteenth century, the widespread belief was that the referent of “cui” in line 63 was Virgil. Recent criticism, however, has tended to argue on behalf of Beatrice as the target of Guido’s disdain (see Pagliaro, “Disdegno di Guido,” for an influential exposition of this view). For a comprehensive inventory of this famous crux, see Pier Luigi Cerisola, “Il ‘disdegno’ di Guido Cavalcanti (*Inf.*, X, 61–63),” in *Aevum* 52 (1978), 195–217, who proposes Virgil as the referent of “cui,” as the emblem of Dante’s turn to a politically motivated poetics disdained by Guido; see also his summary of the scholarship that propose God as the referent in question (201–202). I share the view that the “cui” refers to Beatrice.

22. For discussion of the metaphor of blindness and the theological implications of Cavalcante’s line “non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lume,” especially as it relates to the conflicting conceptions of love in Dante and Guido Cavalcanti, see Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the “Divine Comedy”* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 289–94.

23. For Singleton, Cavalcante is the first “anti-allegorist” of Dante’s interpreters on record, for he remains blocked at the literal level of meaning and fails to recognize the transcendental implications of the Pilgrim’s reply that he is being led by one whom Guido “ebbe a disdegno” (“Guido’s Disdain,” 62–63).

24. Dante was one of the Florentine priors who agreed to exile Guido, along with other leading members of the White and Black Guelph factions, for political extremism in June 1300. Though he was soon recalled to Florence, Guido contracted malaria in exile and died later that same year on August 29, 1300. Thus, within the fictional timeframe of Dante’s meeting with Cavalcante in *Inferno* X (April 1300), a pre-exilic Guido still lives—though, of course, he had already died well before Dante commenced the composition of the *Inferno* (in 1304, according to Petrocchi).

25. Underscoring the subtext of Augustine’s divisions between the Heavenly and Earthly Cities in *Inferno* X, Cassell notes that the Pilgrim’s arrival in Dis parallels his descent into the “bickerings and internecine strife of the earthly *polis*—in this case those of the Guelphs and Ghibellines of his own city, Florence, transported to Hell and used as an exemplum” (“Image of *Arca*” 336).

26. See Jean Racine, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950), I, 243; and discussion in Bettini, “Ghosts of Exile,” 22–23.

27. See John Dryden, *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy* (1684), in *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden*, ed. A. Gilbert (New York: American Book, 1940), 637–39.

28. Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. C. Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 81–83. For an interpretation of the poem in relation to the Virgilian subtext, see Lowry Nelson, Jr., “Baudelaire and Virgil: A Reading of “Le Cygne,”” *Comparative Literature* 13 (1961), 332–45; and Bettini, “Ghosts of Exile” 12–13. Like *Inferno* X, “Le cygne” contains issues of paternity and poetic apprenticeship, for it was dedicated to Victor Hugo—bard of that same razed medieval Paris lamented in Baudelaire’s poem—with a letter from December 7, 1859: “Voici des vers faits pour vous et en pensant à vous. Il ne faut pas les juger avec vos yeux sévères, mais avec vos yeux paternels . . .” (“Here are some verses written with you in mind. You should not regard them with severe eyes but rather with paternal ones . . .” [cit. Pichois, *Œuvres complètes*, 1537–38]).

29. Like Dante’s Cavalcante *lacrimans*, Baudelaire’s distressed swan compresses in a single image the affective energies emanating from the *parva Troia* subtext. See Baudelaire’s aforementioned letter to Hugo: “Ce qui était important pour moi, c’était de dire vite tout ce qu’un accident, une image,

peut contenir de suggestions, et comment la vue d'un animal souffrant pousse l'esprit vers tous les êtres que nous aimons, qui sont absents et qui souffrent . . ." ("What was important to me was to say quickly all that an accident, an image can contain by way of associations, and how the prospect of a suffering animal pushes the spirit toward all those beings whom we love, who are absent and who suffer . . ." [cit. Pichois, *Œuvres complètes*, 1538]).

30. T. S. Eliot, *The Bible as Scripture and as Literature*, Address, Boston, December 1932, Houghton Library; b.MS.Am.1691 (26), 11–12. Cited by Ricks, *Allusion*, 4.

# The Paradisal Body in Giovanni di Paolo's Illuminations of the *Commedia*

BENJAMIN DAVID

The illuminations to Dante's *Paradiso* by the fifteenth-century Sienese painter Giovanni di Paolo illustrate much of the complexity and ambivalence of Dante's own representations of the body in *Paradiso*.<sup>1</sup> The status of the body in the afterlife is a constant preoccupation of the poem. So is the means of imaging the body, for both the poet and the painter. Dante indicates at the beginning of his ascent (*Par.* 1.73–75) that he is not certain if his body came along on the journey. Souls in Paradise affirm their longing for their bodies:

Tanto mi parver sùbiti e accorti  
e l'uno e l'altro coro a dicer "Amme!",  
che ben mostrar disio d'i corpi morti:  
forse non pur per lor, ma per le mamme,  
per li padri e per li altri che fuor cari  
anzi che fosser sempiterne fiamme.<sup>2</sup>

(*Par.* 14.61–66)

The bodies Dante encounters are spectral projections of the souls in the Empyrean. Giovanni di Paolo's illustrations depict the souls as embodied, with the multiple and plural associations the body evokes. In his visual representations, the souls are embodied in two ways. The generality of souls appear as golden-haired naked bodies in groups, indistinguishable from each other. The souls that Dante singles out, reprising their history to make them recognizable, are depicted by Giovanni as clothed, usually in costumes meant to evoke their earthly history. He depicts their embodiment as something beyond a visual aid for the pilgrim's convenience.

These souls possess vivid memories and emotions. Their stories are given form in Giovanni's colorful narrative episodes. Dante's spectral bodies gradually disappear into the points of light in the Empyrean. Giovanni di Paolo, however, re-reads the poem, often placing bodies—even that of Beatrice—where they do not seem to belong. In negotiating the difficult problem of the body in Paradise, the artist's images point to the problems of using the body as metaphor. Images that engage the poem as profoundly as these also succeed in picturing the tensions, contradictions, and ambivalence of the poem. Dante's descriptions of the body in *Paradiso* are characterized by a mixing of sacred and sexual connotations. This essay will explore some tensions and contradictions between the sacred and the sexual in the depictions of bodies both by the poet Dante and by the painter Giovanni di Paolo, who sought to visualize Dante's Paradise.

Before embarking on a discussion of these problems of representation, an account of the manuscript and its place in Giovanni di Paolo's work will be useful. The manuscript of the *Divine Comedy* known as Yates-Thompson Ms. 36, now in the British Library, has been called the most important Siennese secular manuscript of the fifteenth century. Its 115 illuminations are the work of two different artists. The identity of the first illuminator, who painted a historiated initial for each canticle and 51 miniatures for *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, has been much debated; the Siennese painters Vecchietta, Priamo della Quercia, and Nicola da Siena are among those suggested.<sup>3</sup> Whether Giovanni di Paolo was a part of the original commission or whether he was called in to complete work left undone by the first illuminator is not known. In executing the 61 miniatures for *Paradiso*, Giovanni adhered to the shape and size of the framed miniatures used by the first illuminator, taking over the figure type, costume and coloring of the Dante figure of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. On the opening page of *Paradiso*, we see both artists at work in the same space (Fig. 1, f. 129r). Within the initial "L" that opens the canticle ("La gloria di colui che tutto move"), the first illuminator has portrayed Christ in a griffin-drawn chariot, the symbols of the four evangelists, and the scene of the Fall; Giovanni di Paolo's work on *Paradiso* begins at the base of the page with an illustration of Dante's invocation to Apollo, the god of Poetry.

Internal evidence for dating the manuscript is provided by two of Giovanni di Paolo's illuminations that show the Florentine Duomo (ff. 145r, 159r). In an illumination for Canto 17 depicting Dante's exile from Florence (Fig. 6, f. 159r), the east end of the Duomo, with Brunelleschi's



cupola, but without the lantern and with at least one unfinished exedra, is painted at far left. The cupola was dedicated in 1436; the exedras were finished in March 1444; work on the lantern commenced in March 1446.<sup>4</sup> Although documentation of the commission is lacking, the manuscript was commissioned by or for Alfonso V of Aragon, the founder of one of the greatest libraries of the Renaissance. Following the conquest of Naples in 1442, he became Alfonso I of Sicily and Naples.<sup>5</sup> A date for the manuscript ca. 1438–1444 has been conjectured, based on the earliest documented use of Alfonso's arms in the Biblioteca Alfonsina in Naples. The opening page of *Inferno* (f. 1r) displays the arms of Aragon, and the shield of Aragon appears four times in *Paradiso* (ff. 134r, 140r, 143r, 166r). The illumination for *Par.* 21 (f. 166r), for example, refers back to Dante's lines about three rulers of Sicily: "Guiglielmo fu, cui quella terra plora / che piagne Carlo e Federigo vivo: / ora conosce come s'innamora / lo ciel del giusto rege . . ." (*Par.* 20.62–65); a fourth king, added by Giovanni di Paolo, holds the arms of Aragon and may be offering a compliment to Alfonso himself as "a righteous king."<sup>6</sup> Alfonso was an important patron of Lombard illuminators, but Siennese manuscripts are not found in the records of the Alfonsina.<sup>7</sup> Indeed Siennese Dante manuscripts are rare in themselves. Cristina de Benedictis argues that a conservatism among painters and patrons in Siena hindered the development of Dante illustrations, emphasizing the fact that Yates-Thompson Ms. 36 was produced for a non-Siennese patron.<sup>8</sup> If Giovanni di Paolo's *Paradiso* is remarkable as a Siennese Dante illustration, it is not at all remarkable for Giovanni di Paolo, whose powers of invention, as Carl Brandon Strehlke has argued, "excelled in narrative subjects that had little or no fixed visual tradition in Siennese art."<sup>9</sup> As narrative inventions the Dante illustrations must be counted, along with a series of panels representing the life of Saint Catherine of Siena and those of Saint John the Baptist, as being among his most important works. The first point that needs to be made when investigating Giovanni di Paolo's visual illustrations of *Paradiso* is that they must be understood on their own terms. Dante illustrations have as much, or more, to do with other images and the working practices of artists as they do with Dante's poem. Pope-Hennessy argued that the framed oblong miniatures placed at the bottom of the page in Yates-Thompson Ms. 36 resemble other Dante manuscripts less than they resemble fourteenth-century French manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose* or the early fifteenth-century Italian secular manuscripts of the Troy romance.<sup>10</sup> In 1417, Giovanni di Paolo was paid for miniatures for a Book of Hours for a Lombard

patron, and it is likely that he was familiar with Lombard book illumination. A Lombard manuscript of the *Commedia* now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence (Banco Rari 39), containing illuminated initials within the text column extending, with some gaps, throughout the poem, dates from around 1400. The conception of Dante and Beatrice in flight—for example in the illustration for Canto 7 (BR 39 f. 331r), and the selection of some scenes, for example, Venus within her temple before kneeling worshipers to illustrate Canto 8 (BR 39 f. 333v)—are precursors of some of Giovanni's narrative choices.<sup>11</sup> Although no written instructions to the artist from the patron or a scholarly adviser have been found, it has been suggested that Giovanni di Paolo may have consulted with Ser Giovanni de ser Buccio da Spoleto, a professor of grammar at the University of Siena, who gave yearly public readings of Dante from 1396 until 1445.<sup>12</sup> In the page layout of the manuscript, the single column of writing is placed at the far left, perhaps to leave room for a commentary, which, however, was never supplied.<sup>13</sup> Commentaries on the *Divine Comedy* could be a mediating factor in the practice of illustration, and Giovanni's illustrations show that he often referred to the *Ottimo Commento*, the earliest Florentine commentary (ca. 1333–1337), thought to be the work of the Florentine notary Ser Andrea di Ser Lancia. In the fifteenth century it was highly valued for the range of its classical allusion.<sup>14</sup> The reliance by artists on pattern books, books of drawings in which stock figures and compositions were kept to be recycled in different pictures, resulted in a high degree of mediation between the artist and the text. The working practice of Giovanni di Paolo is notable both for his narrative inventiveness and for his imaginative re-use of patterns and drawings in different compositions.<sup>15</sup> For example, Giovanni adapted the same pattern to create the figure of Iphigenia in the illumination for Canto 5 of *Paradiso* (f. 137r) and the figure of St. Agnes in the Lecceto Antiphony, ca. 1442 (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, codex G.I.8., f. 118r). Giovanni di Paolo's miniatures for *Paradiso* constitute an extraordinary response to Dante's poem, articulated at an intensely creative moment of his career in which Dantesque materials informed other major works, such as his panel paintings *The Creation*, and *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise* and *Paradise* (New York, Metropolitan Museum, Robert Lehman Collection), painted around 1445, both therefore close in time and in narrative style to the *Paradiso* illuminations.<sup>16</sup>

In Giovanni's first illumination for Canto 1 (Fig. 1, f. 129r), Dante, at left, is offered two laurel crowns by Apollo as the nine muses cluster on a cloud overhead; at right, the satyr Marsyas plays on his flute while the sheath of his body, from which the god has separated him, lies discarded on the ground. Giovanni di Paolo's representational strategy seizes upon Dante's rich poetic language, turning it at will into pictorial description compounding classical mythology, history, and Christian theology. From the outset the character of the illuminations for *Paradiso* reflects that of the humanist court to which they were sent, a classicizing environment that delighted in the articulation of power relations expressed in images from mythology and chivalric romance, and which was likely to think of heaven as a humanist court where conversations about philosophy, theology, literature and politics were valued.

In the second illumination for Canto 1 (Fig. 2, f. 130r), Giovanni's disposition of images is typical of his narrative strategy. We see Beatrice and Dante, their bodies poised in graceful relation to each other, with the overlap (in this case Dante's head and Beatrice's hand) that is characteristic of Giovanni's depiction of them. Beatrice and Dante are flying in the same activated space as the content of their discourse. As in the text, they gaze into the sun, which is flaming at the center of the circles and crosses that Dante deploys to position the sun at the spring equinox. Below, occupying the same picture plane, Giovanni visualizes other elements of the same moment. At the lower left, he represents Dante's comparison of his own "transhumanization" as he begins his ascent through Paradise to that of Ovid's fisherman Glaucus, who ate a mysterious herb and metamorphosed into a sea god.

Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei,  
Qual si fê Glauco nel gustar de l'erba  
Che 'l fê consorto in mar de li altri dèi.

Trasumanar significar *per verba*  
Non si poria . . .

(*Par.* 1.69–71)

The blue-robed pilgrim is at a diagonal to the right, in an upward trajectory. At the lower left, Giovanni portrays Glaucus in the very process of metamorphosis. His upper body clad in a rose colored shirt, the fisherman grips his rod with both hands, balancing the weight of the hooked fish; his lower half has completed the transformation to sea creature. In Ovid's

*Metamorphoses*, Glaucus says that not Proteus, Triton, nor Palaemon exceeds him in power, and that the sea gods received him into their company. Dante does not mention this trio, but the *Ottimo Commento* specifies their presence; Giovanni chooses to show these gods in human form, differentiated only by the trident held by the central figure.<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneously, Giovanni represents Beatrice's explanation that the force drawing Dante upwards expresses the teleological order of the universe, in which

tutte nature, per diverse sorti,  
più al principio loro e men vicine;  
onde si muovono a diversi porti  
per lo gran mar de l'essere . . .  
(*Par.* 1. 111–13)

Giovanni portrays “living creatures outside reason” in some variety, from the hedgehog to the cock. These, along with male and female humans, the creatures “with intellect and love,” are placed by Giovanni in the same green sea into which the metamorphosed Glaucus leaps. Turning symbolism into visual description, Giovanni sets the creatures of Beatrice's philosophical discourse alongside the creatures of Dante's poetic simile in the “vast ocean of being.” The mixing of narrative levels is significant here. Narratives of thought, action, and description, replete with figurative language, find representation within the same rectangular space of the miniature. Pope-Hennessy wrote that Giovanni's illuminations to the *Paradise* showed “the artist's inability to differentiate between episodes from the body of the narrative and the similes with which they are adorned.”<sup>18</sup> To my mind it is precisely the lack of differentiation between levels in this mode of illustration that pictures a fundamental condition of Dante's poem. By mixing narrative levels, Giovanni's miniatures respond in intricate ways to the plural meanings of Dante's text.

Above the human figures, at the center of the miniature, a naked winged youth appears within colorful concentric spheres. In this manner Giovanni depicts Dante's “amor che 'l ciel governi” (*Par.* 1.74), the love that governs heaven. To illustrate this, Giovanni uses an image of the winged Amor that draws upon deeply connected visual traditions, the classical and the Christian. Giovanni's representation of Amor as a naked figure standing within concentric spheres is related to medieval Christian pictorial tradition representing man as the microcosm surrounded by the

macrocosm, in which the human figure (usually Adam) stands at the center of a circle with outstretched arms. Sometimes the figure extending its arms is Christ.<sup>19</sup> Giovanni's winged figure also has a connection to classical figures that could be assigned meanings as different as Eros and Death, depending on the visual context.<sup>20</sup> The resemblance to representations of the classical Eros is complicated by fifteenth-century innovations in Italian art that adapt the classical figure to represent a whole variety of spirits.<sup>21</sup>

Regina Psaki observes that "The language Dante uses to describe the love that we cannot begin to understand, the underlying machine which powers the pilgrim's ascent and the entire universe's motion, is the language of bodily, sexual love."<sup>22</sup> Dante's use of sexually charged language finds an analogy in Giovanni di Paolo's visual vocabulary. The figure of Amor embodies the bond between sacred and sexual.

The naked winged figure of love is intimately connected to another divine protagonist in these illuminations: the goddess Venus, as she appears in Giovanni's illustration of the opening lines of Canto 8 (Fig. 3, f. 142r):

Solea creder lo mondo in suo periclo  
che la bella Ciprigna il folle amore  
raggiasse, volta nel terzo epiciclo;  
per che non pur a lei faceano onore  
di sacrificio e di votivo grido  
le genti antiche ne l'antico errore;  
ma Dione onoravano e Cupido  
quella per madre sua, questo per figlio,  
e dicean ch'el sedette in grembo a Dido;  
(*Par.* 8.1–9)

In Giovanni's illustration of these lines, a polarity with regard to love seems to be established. At one narrative level Beatrice is flying with Dante toward the heaven of Venus. At another narrative level, Dante describes to the reader the error of the ancients in believing that the planet Venus incited love as did the goddess for whom it was named. Giovanni depicts Beatrice, who has not been addressed in these lines, looking back at the pictorialization of Dante's words about the ancient worship of this goddess. The gesture of head-turning, depicted as if it has happened in the instant, and carrying a measure of disapproval, complemented by the graceful protective hand placed on the pilgrim's back, is one instance of

Giovanni's expressive handling of the image of Beatrice. Her gaze establishes a connection with the temple of Venus at the left. What we look at is not specifically prescribed by the poem, for in the temple, surrounded by worshipers of the ancient religion, stands Venus with *two* sons. This image illustrates not the poem but the commentary on the poem. The author of the *Ottimo Commento* takes Dante's "folle amor," "mad love," as a personification referring to Amor, the son of Venus; the commentator refers to Cupid as "her other son" ("l'altro suo figliuolo"):

. . . li poeti secondo la credenza paganica attribuiscono a Venere due figliuoli, Amore e Cupidine, per due *sui atti* (1) che da lussuria muovono; cioè, amore che puote essere in tra convenevoli persone, e con non soperchia affezione; e cupidine, quando è tanto fervente il desiderio, che non riguarda condizione, nè reverenza alcuna, che sia licito o illecito, nullo a sè amante, o alla persona amata avuto rispetto, cerca di compiere sua voglia: E diceano quelle genti, che questo Cupido sedette in grembo a Dido di Cartagine, quando ella innamorò d'Enea. Secondo che testimonia Vergilio, nello Eneida, dice che Cupido, presa la forma d'Ascanio, andò a Dido, e quella il ricevette ed abbracciò, il quale *in lei* (2) allora immise le sue fiamme.<sup>23</sup>

The commentary overwrites Dante's poem, introducing a polarity of lust and love personified by two sons of Venus, Love (Amor) and Lust (Cupid). Dante writes that the ancients sacrificed not only to the goddess, but also to "Cupid as her son who they believed / Had nestled once in Dido's lap" (see *Par.* 8.8–9). Already implicit in Dante's allusion to Virgil there are two boys—Ascanius, the good son of Aeneas, and Cupid, the cunning son of Venus who impersonates the good son—or, more accurately one boy with two faces: "But the Cytherean revolves in her breast new wiles, new schemes; how Cupid, changed in face and form, may come in the stead of sweet Ascanius, and by his gifts kindle the queen to madness and send the flame into her very marrow" (*Aen.* 1.657–60).<sup>24</sup> Giovanni responds to, but also overwrites, the commentary by representing the two naked boys without any of the customary attributes of *spiritelli d'amore*: bow, quiver, and most notably, wings. Giovanni relies on their nude bodies to signify, thereby complicating the assignment of guilt or innocence.<sup>25</sup>

Giovanni paints two other unusual illustrations that represent Dante's poetic language using winged naked figures for Cantos 13 and 17 (Figs. 4

and 5). Both illustrations suggest the shaping hand of the *Ottimo Commento*. He chooses to illustrate Canto 13 with narrative scenes of the children of Minos (Fig. 4, f. 152r). To assist the reader in picturing the circling dance of the wise men in the Heaven of the Sun, Dante compares it to the double constellation of Ariadne's Crown, "qual fece la figliuola di Minoi / allora che sentì di morte il gelo" (*Par.* 13.13–15). According to Ovid, when Ariadne, "la figliuola di Minoi," died, Bacchus had her admitted to heaven and placed her crown in the sky.<sup>26</sup> The commentator of the *Ottimo Commento* emphatically dismisses the notion that this happened, cross-referencing *Inferno* 12, where the Minotaur presides over the Circle of the Violent. Virgil taunts the half-man half-bull with the memory of Theseus, "che sù nel mondo la morte ti porse," led by clues his sister gave him into and out of the Labyrinth (*Inf.* 12.18). The commentator has already told that story:

Cioè due corone simili a quella, delle quali Arianna figliuola di Minos, quando morì, fece l'una. Di questa Arianna è trattato nel duodecimo capitolo dello *Inferno*; e pero qui non bisogna reiterare, come Teseo per ammaestramento d'Arianna uccise il Minotauro, e lei e Fedra sua sirocchia se ne menò ad Atene; e lei per sua moglie, e Fedra a nome d'Ippolito; e come più piaciendoli poi Fedra che Arianna, egli lasciò Arianna in una isola di mare, nella quale discese Bacco, e per sua la se ne menò in Cièlo, e poi fu convertita in quella costellazione di quella corona: ma il vero fu ch'ella vi morì, e li poeti fingono ch'ella fosse dalli *Dii* convertita in costellazione, che sono due semicirculi, l'uno chiuso dall'altro.<sup>27</sup>

Prompted by the commentary, Giovanni focuses on the comparison between the two children of Minos, linking the imagined scene in the *Inferno* with the allusion to Ariadne in *Paradise* 13.

On the left of the miniature, Theseus slays the Minotaur, the hybrid son, half man-half beast, of Queen Pasiphae of Crete and a bull; on the right, Ariadne, the human daughter of Pasiphae and King Minos, lies sleeping on the island of Naxos after her abandonment by Theseus. A naked winged figure flies down to Ariadne and grasps her hand. Does the figure represent the torment of love she has experienced with Theseus? Is the figure an emissary of love from the god Bacchus, who promises to take her to heaven and create a constellation to honor her? Is this the god himself?

Another naked winged figure appears in Giovanni's illustration for Canto 17. At upper right, Dante's great-grandfather, Cacciaguida, foretells

Dante's expulsion from Florence: "Qual si partio Ipolito d'Atene / per la spietata e perfida noverca, / tal di Fiorenza partir ti convene" (*Par.* 17.46–48). Giovanni paints two miniatures to enforce the weight of this prophecy, the first showing the fate of Hippolytus (Fig. 5, f. 158r), the second showing Dante's parallel fate (Fig. 6, 159r, above). The pairing demonstrates Giovanni's virtuosity at visualizing the terms of Dante's similes and elaborating narrative in a way that integrates the mythological reference. Both illuminations use the device of continuous narrative. Giovanni di Paolo depicts the exiled Hippolytus twice, first leaving the gate of Athens, then again, crushed beneath his chariot and dragged by his stampeding horses. The grief and dread expressed in the body of Hippolytus resonate with the postural expressiveness of Giovanni's illuminations for the Antiphonary of the Augustinian hermitage of Lecceto near Siena: that of the young saint hiding his face in his hands before execution (f. 62v) or the man bowed over as Death draws his bow (f. 162r).<sup>28</sup> Giovanni's Hippolytus figures Dante's own grief in exile (Fig. 2, f. 159r).<sup>29</sup>

On the left of Giovanni's *Paradiso* miniature, the familiar naked winged figure communicates with Phaedra. Giovanni may again be reading the passage through the gloss in the *Ottimo Commento*:

Qual si partì Ipolito dalla città d'Atene, di comandamento del suo padre Teseo, per lo conforto e suggestione di Fedra, spietata matrigna del detto Ipolito, e moglie (però non legittimamente presa) del detto Teseo, del quale è tocco, capitolo XII *Inferni*; cotale ti conviene partire dalla tua città di Firenze.<sup>30</sup>

The figure may represent the son of Venus who excites the inordinate sexual desire spoken of in the *Ottimo Commento*, having no "respect either for the one who loves or the one who is loved." But again Giovanni does not give the figure a bow, a minimal attribute for Cupid, and thus he allows the figure to expand beyond iconographic boundaries. Phaedra's pose suggests supplication. Is she being incited by the winged figure to illicit love or is she pleading to be released from its grip?

There is nothing very specific about these winged figures. How are we to tell one from the other? Not even the particular signifying instance, with Ariadne or Phaedra to anchor the meaning, allows us to do so with specificity. I do not suggest that it is the intention of Giovanni di Paolo here to picture the ambivalent intersections of the two kinds of love, but rather that his images operate within a condition in which meanings and



references cannot be kept completely distinct and separate from one another. It is at the level of signification that these different kinds of loves are intertwined, regardless of what may have been the intention. This winged figure is a sign that can be motivated by different contexts, but not without bearing the trace of its previous manifestations. The naked winged figures set up but simultaneously dissolve an opposition of visualizations of sexuality.<sup>31</sup>

A good example of this ambivalence can be found in the illustration for Canto 21 (Fig. 7, f. 165r). Giovanni has chosen a narrative strategy for this canto that succeeds in magnifying the sensual in Dante's language. In depicting the heaven of Saturn, Giovanni replaces Dante's description of the contemplatives climbing a golden ladder that reaches to the Empyrean with what underlies it, the biblical image of angels climbing a heavenly ladder in Jacob's dream (Gen. 28:12). Dante and Beatrice engage with the figure of Saturn, described by Dante as the ruler of the classical Golden Age. Giovanni has chosen a representation of Saturn as a planetary god, an old man with a sickle, which is among the most ambivalent of visual images; its many associations, all current in the fifteenth century, range from castration myths to a legendary golden age to Dante's reintroduction of the Neoplatonic association with contemplation.<sup>32</sup> At lower left, the figure of Semele forms a visual counterpart to the figures of Dante and Beatrice, who are flying in a different direction, and a different level of the narrative, but in the same visual airspace. This is one of Giovanni's most beautiful renderings of a simile as pictorial description. We see the figure of Semele in flames, a depiction of Beatrice's arresting words, "ma 'S'io ridessi,' / . . . 'tu ti faresti quale / fu Semelè quando di cener fessi'" (*Par.* 21.4–6). Semele, pregnant with Jupiter's child, was persuaded by Juno to ask to look at Jupiter in his glory; the sight reduced her to ashes.

The graceful feathery lines of the flames are in rhythm with the horizontal and overlapping bodies of Beatrice and Dante; Semele's green cloak, the pink of her dress, and the gold of her hair are remarked again in the wings and garb of the angels, who rise as she goes down. The white ash that forms as she burns counterpoints the white of Saturn's sickle and Beatrice's cap. Giovanni's image of Semele on fire evokes both the immensity of the desire to look on God, as the contemplatives do, and as Dante wishes to, and the immensity of sexual longing. The vivid analogy between the flaming Semele ignited by the divine presence of her lover

Jupiter and Dante, impassioned by the sight of Beatrice in her full presence, creates surplus meaning all around. Dante's erotic "burning" recalls another famous burning, kindled when Venus's son Cupid "sedette in grembo a Dido" (*Par.* 8.9), a verse intended to recall the Virgilian line "incendat reginam atque ossibus implicet ignem" (*Aen.* 1.660).

In Giovanni's remarkable illumination—both remarkable as a beautiful work of art and "re-markable" in the sense of a saturated space in which references endlessly contaminate and change one another—human sexual experience and the sexuality of the divine are made to seem coterminous. But divine sexuality fails to signify purely.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most striking ambivalent body in Giovanni di Paolo's miniatures is the figure of Adam. Giovanni represents Adam three times. In *Paradiso* 7, Beatrice, observed by the emperor Justinian who, as he kneels on his law books in the sphere, explains to Dante the mystery of the Redemption (Fig. 8, f. 141r). Giovanni turns her explanation into a pictorial sequence. Adam and Eve stand next to the Tree of Knowledge in the garden, and we may guess from their gestures that the Fall has taken place, although not the Expulsion. Adam seems to look out from the garden toward the annunciation and the crucifixion. Incarnation and sacrifice make possible the redemption of Adam free of sin in body and soul.

In *Par.* 13, Christ appears between Adam and Solomon, illustrating St. Thomas Aquinas's explanation of degrees of perfection. Giovanni represents Adam again as a beautiful young man, described as the perfect living creature directly created from the earth by God (Fig. 9, f. 153r). But Giovanni dresses Adam in an animal skin, such as he would have worn after the expulsion from the garden. Why cannot Adam, even in his textual embodiment as the perfect creature before the Fall, be represented without some mark of the Fall? It is as if the embodiment of Adam cannot be given imaginative shape without being shaped by the Fall.

A key emphasis of studies of sacred sexuality in Dante falls on Dante's focus on the body and the longing that souls in Paradise express for their bodies, to be resurrected at the Last Judgment. This reintegration of body and soul has been hard for us to conceptualize, both now and in the fifteenth century, when these illuminations were made. Rachel Jacoff writes about the "final future event" of the Last Judgment and its "teleology of embodiment": "The project of integrating the body remained incomplete despite the unambiguous Christian doctrinal affirmation of

the body in the doctrines of creation, the incarnation of Christ, and the resurrection of the body.”<sup>34</sup>

If the promise of the human body free of sin can be seen in Beatrice's narrative of redemption (Fig. 8), the “incompleteness” of the integration of the body in spite of the Christian “teleology of embodiment” can be seen in Giovanni di Paolo's miniature to Canto 26 (Fig. 10, f. 176r). Beatrice identifies a soul to Dante: “Dentro da quei rai / vagheggia il suo fattor l'anima prima / che la prima virtù creasse mai” (*Par.* 26.82–84). Dante addresses the soul as “padre antico,” the progenitor of the human race: “O pomo che maturo / solo prodotto fosti, o padre antico / a cui ciascuna sposa è figlia e nuro” (26.91–93).

Few of us would fail to identify this figure in Giovanni's illustration. Giovanni might have chosen to follow a convention of portraying Adam in this scene as an old man in long robes with a flowing beard, as he was when Christ took him out of Limbo.<sup>35</sup> Instead, Adam is depicted here as the youth following the temptation and expulsion. He is marked by the fig leaf covering his genitals that signals his awareness of his nakedness and focuses attention on the sexual body, as if that body in particular must pertain to him. It remains the body of the Fall and of the Expulsion. The fig leaf is a sign of Adam's shame, although he is now in Paradise where there is no shame, a visual sign of his discomfort with embodiment. Why is Adam wearing a fig leaf in Paradise? The fig leaf, I think, is the artist's choice to depict Adam with a known attribute for ease of recognition.<sup>36</sup> It was probably not Giovanni di Paolo's intention to suggest that Adam, when he finally gets his body back after the Last Judgment, will be ashamed of it. But the succession of his images of Adam signals otherwise. Peter Brieger's comment that Giovanni's Adam is “represented as he was created, holding a leaf to cover his nakedness,” ignores the problematic implications of this image. Pope-Hennessy sees Giovanni's Adam as “the heroic youth of the Expulsion from Paradise, not inappropriately since the poem deals with the nature of his sin and with the Fall.”<sup>37</sup> I am arguing that Giovanni's representation of Adam is complexly and profoundly inappropriate and that in its very inappropriateness the representation gathers up but does not unify many of the disparate views of the body expressed in Dante's poem.

I would apply Psaki's observation to this case: It is “easier for us to imagine love without the sexual body, than the sexual body without sin.”<sup>38</sup> This Adam signifies knowledge of embodiment still marked by

shame. He seems to mark a point at which Giovanni's strategy of representation of embodied souls seems to unravel. Adam's body defies representation. Although Adam knows Dante's wish because he sees it in "that Mirror of the Truth," the mind of God, and can speak to Dante of "such long exile" because he is no longer in exile (*Par.* 26.106, 116), this first human body is depicted as postlapsarian, not paradisaical. The contradictions in Giovanni's figure of Adam cannot be resolved in a unity. But neither can they be separated and forced into a stable polarity.

At the end of *Paradise*, trying to recapture his experience of God in memory, Dante writes: "Un punto solo m'è maggior letargo / che venticinque secoli a la 'mpresa / che fè Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo" (*Par.* 33. 94–6). Giovanni di Paolo chooses a pictorialization of this simile for the last miniature of the cycle (Fig. 11, f. 190r). Neptune had never seen a ship on the water, casting its shadow, until Jason began his Quest for the Golden Fleece. The Argo is empty, as if the voyage is complete. On the right of the miniature, the figure of Neptune, with an expressive gesture, registers his shock at the sight of the first ship.

Giovanni di Paolo again illustrates not just a part of the canto, but the condition of the poem in which Dante and Beatrice, and the Christian and the Antique, are made contiguous and impossible to disentangle. Dominating the illumination in a lavish display of golden light and cloth is the frontally posed Virgin of the Assumption, Mary as she was bodily assumed into Heaven: a figure of embodiment. Only Christ and Mary rose to Heaven in this "double raiment," body and soul (*Par.* 25.92, 127–28).<sup>39</sup> Dante kneels in adoration and Beatrice, her hand on Dante's head, seems to act as a conduit into the vision. Beatrice? In Dante's poem Beatrice handed Dante over to St. Bernard and entered the White Rose two cantos earlier. Psaki writes that "Although it is notably *not* Beatrice who accompanies Dante to the climax of the beatific vision, this does not I think mean that he in some way leaves her behind."<sup>40</sup> In Giovanni di Paolo's visual interpretation, Beatrice pointedly *does* accompany Dante to the climax. Giovanni di Paolo does not choose to separate Beatrice and Dante. But neither, if this is true, has she entered the Rose. There is, one could say, a visual re-enactment of Beatrice's first appearance in the manuscript, in canto 1 (Fig. 2), airborne with Dante, facing into the golden light of the sun, while beneath lie the sea gods in the great ocean of being. In this final miniature it is Beatrice and Dante who figure the problem of the body in *Paradise*.

In Giovanni di Paolo's visual interpretation of *Paradise*, the miniatures engage the text in ways that ask us to call into question our desire to keep meanings distinct and arrayed in a hierarchy. For Dante, Christ's Sacrifice and Incarnation may have created precisely the conditions for a unity that allows Beatrice and Dante to look forward to their bodies in Paradise, sexual beings, Dante's language suggests, free of sin. Giovanni di Paolo's illuminations, however, provide us with figures of ambivalence rather than integration. If signification is pure in Paradise, these images still dwell in the realm of unlikeness.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps in the "real" world of Dante's paradise there is an identity of things and their meanings, but that is not something that Giovanni di Paolo's images can represent. Dante continually suggests that he himself struggles to depict such an identity. Perhaps it is precisely this difficulty that is most successfully visualized in Giovanni di Paolo's miniatures, and the vehicle for this visualization is the body.

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## NOTES

1. This essay began as a paper for a panel organized by F. Regina Psaki for the American Association of Italian Studies meeting in Washington, D. C., 2003. I am grateful for her advice and encouragement.

2. All passages from the poem follow the text established by Giorgio Petrocchi in Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*. 4 vols. Ed. Giorgio Petrocchi. Società Dantesca Italiana, Edizione Nazionale (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–1967). I have used the English verse translation of Mark Musa, *The Divine Comedy*, 3 vols. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), revised 1984–1986.

3. I discuss this illuminator in "Sites of Confluence: The Master of the Yates-Thompson *Divine Comedy*," in *Illuminations: Medieval and Renaissance Studies for Jonathan J. G. Alexander*, eds. Susan L'Engle, Erik Inglis, and Gerry Guest (Harvey Miller Publishers), forthcoming; Miklòs Boskovits designates the painter simply "Master of the Yates-Thompson *Divine Comedy*," "Il gotico senese rivisitato: proposte e commenti su una mostra," *Arte cristiana* 71 (1983), 268–69, 271, 275; Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, "Lorenzo Vecchietta, Priamo della Quercia, Nicola da Siena: nuove osservazioni sulla *Divina Commedia* Yates Thompson 36," in *Jacopo della Quercia fra Gotico e Rinascimento* (Florence: Centro di Firenze, 1977), 203–228; Giulietta Chelazzi Dini, Alessandro Angelini, and Bernardina Sani, *Siene Painting From Duccio to the Birth of the Baroque*, trans. Cordelia Warr (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 248–251; Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss, and Charles S. Singleton, *Illuminated Manuscripts of The Divine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 1.70–80, 110–113. For extended discussions of Yates-Thompson Ms. 36, see John Pope-Hennessy, *A Siene Codex of The Divine Comedy* (Oxford and London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1947); John Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso: The Illuminations of Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo* (New York: Random House, 1993), which reproduces all the illuminations in color; Kristi Ann Wormhoudt, "Manuscript Illuminations by Giovanni di Paolo" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1984).

4. Pope-Hennessy conjectures that the manuscript may have been commissioned in March 1444, when representatives of Alfonso were in Siena for a peace conference; in October 1447, a deputation

from Siena to Alfonso's camp during a campaign on Sienese territory arrived "con un bello e ricco presente," possibly the manuscript; see *Paradiso: The Illuminations*, 10–12, 34.

5. Lorenzo Valla and Panormita were among the humanist scholars who spent time at his court, as well as Guiniforte Barzizza, who may have participated in the commission of the manuscript; see Pope-Hennessy, *A Sienese Codex*, 9; Wormhoudt, "Manuscript Illuminations," 108–114.

6. See Brieger et al., *Illuminated Manuscripts* 1.197–198; Pope-Hennessy, *A Sienese Codex*, 25, and Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso: The Illuminations*, 51, 140; Wormhoudt, *Manuscript Illuminations*, 104–105.

7. Pope-Hennessy, *A Sienese Codex*, 8–10.

8. Cristina de Benedictis, "La fortuna della *Divina commedia* nella miniatura senese," *Studi di storia dell'arte* 8 (1997), 49–68.

9. Carl Brandon Strehlke, "Giovanni di Paolo," in Keith Christiansen, Laurence B. Kanter, and Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena: 1420–1500* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988), 169; the entire essay, 168–242, is relevant, but especially 193–200.

10. See Pope-Hennessy, *A Sienese Codex*, 8; see note 13: "certain features of the Yates-Thompson codex derive ultimately from the tradition of French secular manuscript painting," perhaps with Bolognese intermediaries; for discussions of the tradition of Dante illustration, see Peter Brieger et al., "Pictorial Commentaries to the *Commedia*, in Brieger et al. *Illuminated Manuscripts*, 1.83–113; Dorothy Hughes Gillerman, "Trecento Illustrators of the *Divina Commedia*," rpt. *Dante Studies* 118 (2000), 130–65, originally in *Annual Report of the Dante Society of America* 77 (1959), 1–40; Rachel Owen, "Dante's Reception by 14th- and 15th-century Illustrators of the *Commedia*," *Dante: Current Trends in Dante Studies*, ed. Claire E. Honess, *Reading Medieval Studies* 27 (2001), 163–225.

11. Brieger, "Pictorial Commentaries," in Brieger et al., 1.105–106, 110, makes the comparison to Giovanni di Paolo's *Paradise*; see 2.445, 448–449, for reproductions; see Owen, "Dante's Reception," 168–169 and 188–189, note 20 for bibliography on this manuscript.

12. See Pietro Rossi, "La 'lectura Dantis' nello studio senese," in *Studi giuridici dedicati e offerti a Francesco Schupfer nella ricorrenza del XXXV anno del suo insegnamento* (Turin: Bocca, 1898), 2.155–73; C. F. Goffis, "Giovanni de ser Buccio da Spoleto," in *Enciclopedia dantesca* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1971), 3:192–193. Although written instructions to the artist might be expected, Owen, "Dante's Reception," 185 note 5, found no contract with specific instructions relating to any manuscript of the *Commedia*.

13. Owen, *Dante's Reception*, 177, 178, errs in stating that a commentary "accompanies the text in this manuscript."

14. All references to the commentary in this essay are to *L'Ottimo Commento della Divina Commedia: testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante* (Pisa: Presso Niccolò Capurro, 1829), ed. Alessandro Torri, reprinted with a preface by Francesco Mazzoni (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1995). Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso*, 12–13, discusses the *Ottimo* in relation to Dante illustration. For Andrea Lancia, see Bruno Sandkühler, "Die Kommentare zur *Commedia* bis zur Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts," in *Die italienische Literatur im Zeitalter Dantes und am Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Renaissance*, ed. August Buck (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1987), 183–186; see also, Steven Botterill, "The Trecento commentaries on Dante's *Commedia*," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2, The Middle Ages, ed. A. J. Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 590–611; Deborah Parker, "Interpreting the Commentary Tradition to the *Comedy*," in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Amilcare A. Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 240–258, gives an overview of medieval and Renaissance commentary and the critical response to the commentary tradition.

15. For Giovanni's reuse of sketches, see Andrew Ladis, "Sources and Resources: The Lost Sketchbooks of Giovanni di Paolo," in *The Craft of Art: Originality and Industry in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque Workshop*, eds. Andrew Ladis and Carolyn Wood (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 48–85; for overall consideration of Giovanni's work, see Strehlke, "Giovanni di Paolo," cited above; John Pope-Hennessy, "Giovanni di Paolo," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* XLVI, no. 2 (1988); John Pope-Hennessy, *Giovanni di Paolo, 1403–1483* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937).

16. See Pietro Rossi, "L'ispirazione dantesca in una pittura di Giovanni di Paolo," *Rassegna d'Arte Senese* 14.4 (1921), 138–149; and Strehlke, "Giovanni di Paolo," Christiansen et al., *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, 200.

17. *L'Ottimo Commento*, vol. 3, *Paradiso*, note 67, p. 21: "e fu fatto mezzo pesce, e ricevuto da Proteo e da Tritone e da Melicerta Dii del mare in loro consorte." Melicerta was the former name of Palaemon, before he was changed into a sea god.

18. Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso*, 26; Pope-Hennessy regards Giovanni's use of simile illustration and of the interpolation of narrative as a naïve holdover from fourteenth-century illumination. Hughes Gilleman, *Trecento Illustrators*, has demonstrated that Trecento artists in this tradition of Dante illumination were making an imaginative choice, not exhibiting a lack of sophistication.

19. For a discussion of this pictorial tradition, see B. Reudenbach, "In mensuram humani corporis: Zur Herkunft der Auslegung und Illustration von *Trecento Illustrators* Vitruv III.1 im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert," in *Text und Bild*, ed. C. Meier and U. Ruberg (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1980), 651–688; see also Robert Zwijnenberg, *The Writings and Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci: Order and Chaos in Early Modern Thought*, trans. Caroline A. van Eck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 102–108. The posture of Giovanni's naked Amor in Fig. 2 approximates that of the (clothed) Christ the Redeemer standing before the spheres in canto 28, f. 178r. Since this latter image is taken almost exactly from a panel of the intarsia choir stalls in the chapel of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena made by Domenico Niccolò dei Cori between 1415 and 1428, the naked Amor is likely also rooted in that image.

20. Compare the Roman winged adolescent reproduced by Roger Stuveras, *Le putto dans l'art romain* in *Collection Latomus*, Vol. 99 (1969), photograph 69. An example of the naked winged figure appears on the reverse of Pisanello's bronze medal of Leonello d'Este made in 1444, where the figure represents love; see Joanna Woods-Marsden, "Art and Political Identity in Fifteenth-Century Naples," in *Art and Politics in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy: 1250–1500*, ed. Charles M. Rosenberg (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 12–13, and Fig. 2. For the multivalent nature of the naked winged figure in the Renaissance, see Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). For the figure of Amor as a type of Caritas, see R. Freyhan, "The Evolution of the Caritas Figure in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* II (1948), 68–86.

21. An example of the classical figure of Eros would be the sculpture after Lysippus in Museo Capitolino in Rome, reproduced by Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), fig. 151; Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, chapters 1 and 2, discusses the revival and transformation in the early fifteenth century of the classical *genius* into the winged youth or infant the Renaissance called the *spiritello*, in which the Siennese sculptor Jacopo della Quercia and Donatello's *spiritelli* in Siena cathedral are critical developments; see also E. H. Gombrich's remarks on the changing identity of the so-called Eros in Piccadilly Circus in *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1978), 1–5, refuted by Dempsey.

22. "The Sexual Body in Dante's Celestial Paradise," *Imagining Heaven in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*, ed. Jan Swango Emerson and Hugh Feiss, O.S.B. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 56. See also Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 181–189.

23. Dante is explained as saying "che il mondo, cioè li mortali . . . soleano . . . credere che la bella Ciprigna, cioè *Venus*, così detta dall'isola di Cipri, dove avea suo singolare tempio . . . raggiasse di sè il folle Amore; cioè che Amore fosse suo figliuolo," *Ottimo Commento*, 197, 198; see Theresa Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses and Cupids: Sexuality, Hermeneutics, and English Poetry* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1996), especially chapter 2, "Semiotic Nomads," 42–77, for the multiple valences of Venus and Cupid in the writings of mythographers from antiquity to the Later Middle Ages; according to Tinkle, "Mythographic comments on Venus and Cupid form one of very few discourses on sexuality that span the entire Middle Ages," 43.

24. The English translation is by H. R. Fairclough, *Aeneid Books 7–12* (Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1918).

25. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*; Tinkle, *Medieval Venuses and Cupids*, 79; for an early image in which Venus stands between two naked winged boys without bows or quivers, see the fourth-century Roman mosaic from Tunisia reproduced by Stuveras, *Le putto dans l'art romain*, Fig. 155.

26. Ronald L. Martinez, "Ovid's Crown of Stars (*Paradiso* 13.1–27)," in *Dante and Ovid: Essays in Intertextuality*, ed. Madison U. Sowell (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), 123–138, demonstrates that Dante's allusions to Ariadne's death and to her crown relate to Ovid's *Ars amatoria* and the *Fasti* as well as to the *Metamorphoses*. Martinez argues that "mention of Ariadne as daughter of Minos evokes Crete, the Minotaur, Theseus, and Pasiphae, while mention of Bacchus evokes Semele his mother (Bacchus is called *semen Semeles* in Dante's *Epistole* 3.7)," 123 n.2.

27. "And therefore it is not necessary to repeat how Theseus, through the teaching of Ariadne, killed the Minotaur, and he took her and Phaedra, her sister [sirocchia] with him to Athens, the one for his wife and Phaedra for Hippolytus; and how [when] Phaedra pleased him more than Ariadne, he left Ariadne on an island in the sea, where Bacchus descended and took her with him into Heaven, and then she was turned into that constellation of the crown: but the truth was that she died there, and the poets pretend that she was changed by the gods into a constellation, which are two semicircles, one enclosed within the other," *Ottimo Commento*, vol. 3, 312.

28. Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena, codex G.1.8, f. 62v; f.162r; both illuminations are reproduced in Christiansen et al., *Painting in Renaissance Siena*, 182, 187, with Strehlke's discussion, 181–189.

29. For a discussion of the exile analogy, see Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Dante's Ovidian Self-Correction in *Paradiso* 17," in *The Poetry of Allusion: Virgil and Ovid in Dante's Commedia*, ed. Rachel Jacoff and Jeffrey T. Schnapp (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 214–223.

30. "Just as Hippolytus departed from the city of Athens at the command of his father Theseus for the comfort and through the suggestion of Phaedra, the ruthless stepmother of the said Hippolytus, and the wife (though not legitimately taken) of the said Theseus, which is discussed in Canto XII of *Inferno*; so you will be compelled to depart from your city of Florence" (*Ottimo Commento*, 395–96).

31. The clothed winged figure of the archangel on the right of Giovanni's miniature for canto 29 (f. 181r) swoops downward toward the rebel angels in a similar posture to the winged figure in the Hippolytus miniature. Giovanni did not always paint angels clothed: in the *Creation and Expulsion from Paradise* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection), Adam and Eve are expelled from Paradise by a naked winged figure with a halo.

32. Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art* (*La survivance des dieux antiques; essai sur le rôle de la tradition mythologique dans l'humanisme et dans l'art de la Renaissance* [London: Warburg Institute, 1940], trans. *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: the Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1953]; reprinted Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), discusses the pictorial tradition of the planetary gods and reproduces a Saturn image, figure 64, of which Giovanni di Paolo's Saturn is a close relation (Rome, Vatican Library, MS. Urb. Lat.1398). For discussions of the changing interpretations of Saturn see, for example, the essays in *Saturn from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Massimo Ciavolella and Amilcare A. Iannucci (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Edition, 1992); and Theresa Tinkle, "Saturn of the Several Faces: A Survey of the Medieval Mythographic Traditions," *Viator* 18 (1987), 289–307.

33. Teodolinda Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 221–222, regards the heaven of Saturn as the stage where the pilgrim's "mortal senses" cannot tolerate Beatrice's smile or the sounds of Paradise.

34. Rachel Jacoff, "'Our Bodies, Our Selves': The Body in the *Commedia*," *Sparks and Seeds: Medieval Literature and its Afterlife*, ed. Dana E. Stewart and Alison Cornish (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2000), 123.

35. See Brieger et al., vol. 1, 202; compare the Adam in a North Italian manuscript dated 1456 (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, MS Plut. 40.1, 302v and 328v) reproduced in Brieger et al., *Illuminated Manuscripts*, vol. 2, plates 500b and 515b.



36. The earliest representations of Adam and Eve in the Catacombs show them holding fig leaves to hide their nakedness; see Peter and Linda Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 298–299.

37. Brieger et al., *Illuminated Manuscripts*, 1.202; Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso*, 53.

38. Psaki, “The Sexual Body in Dante’s Celestial Paradise,” 58.

39. For the Bodily Assumption of Mary, see, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), who quotes the argument of Bonaventure’s First Sermon on the Assumption “that Mary’s happiness would not be complete unless she were bodily assumed into heaven,” 248 n. 77; Bynum argues, 321, that “Fourteenth-century discussions of the Immaculate Conception and Bodily Assumption of Mary were explorations not only of the nature of sin but also of the nature of sex and the female body”; see the discussion of “anticipatory resurrection” in Rachel Jacoff, “Dante and the Legend(s) of St. John,” *Dante Studies* 117 (1999), 50–55.

40. Psaki, “The Sexual Body in Dante’s Celestial Paradise,” 56.

41. A more extensive study of these illuminations, of which this essay is a part, will take me into the territory traversed by Rita Copeland and Stephen Melville, “Allegory and Allegoresis, Rhetoric and Hermeneutics,” *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 3.1 (Spring 1991), 159–187, esp. 169–178.

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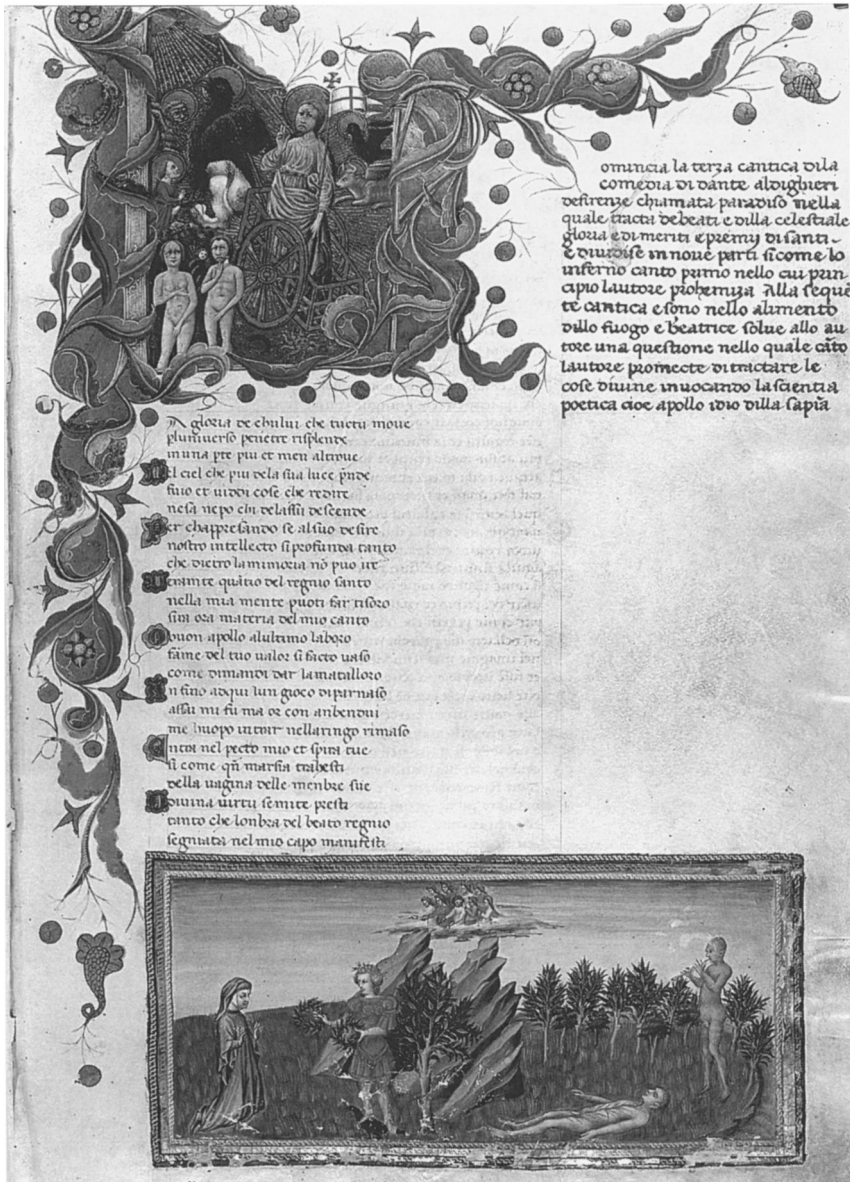


Figure 1 (f. 129r)—Opening page of *Paradise* (Canto 1)

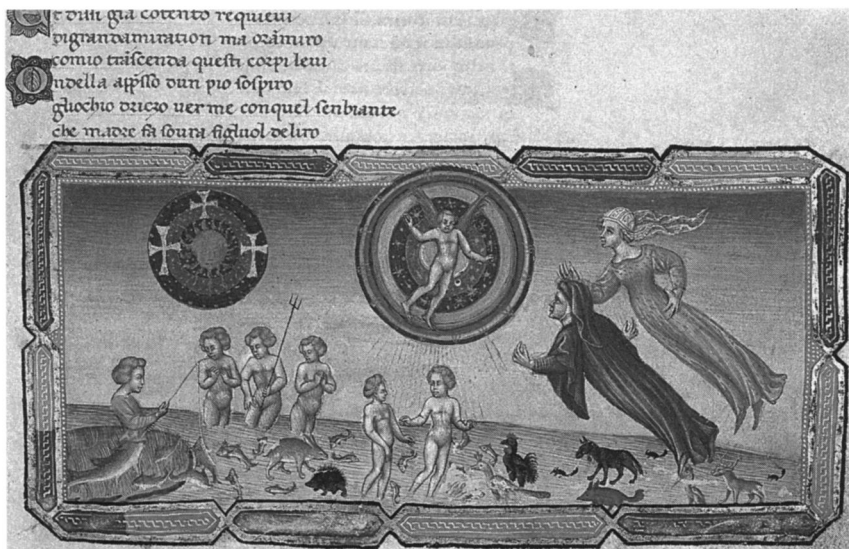


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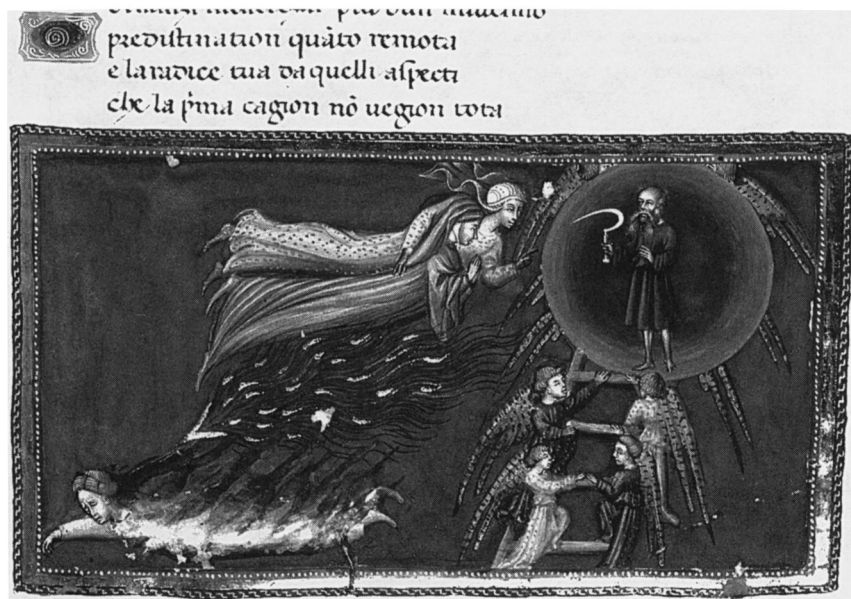
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**Figure 5 (f. 158r)—Phaedra, Exile and Death of Hippolytus (Canto 17)**



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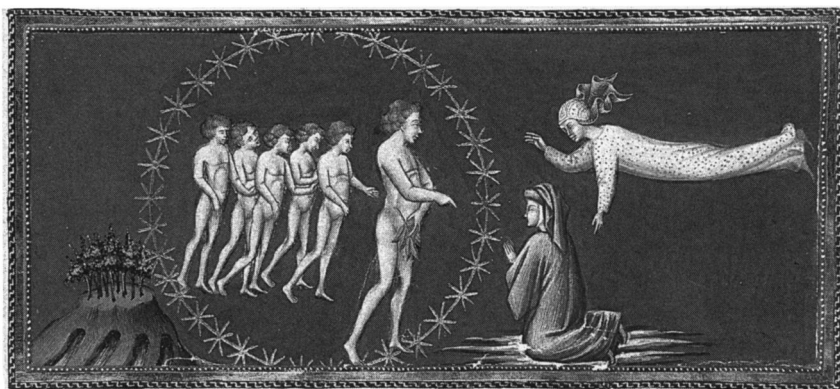
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# The Birth and Death of the Soul

HOWARD NEEDLER

In *Purgatorio* 25, Dante places in the mouth of the Roman poet Statius an exposition of the origin of the human soul. It is not until this account occurs that the reader of the *Commedia* realizes that the poem also contains a correlative account of the death of the human soul.<sup>1</sup> In a general sense, of course, the *Inferno* is such an account: the souls of the damned are referred to more than once as “dead,” and it doesn’t seem far-fetched to think of them as dead, insofar as they are definitively sundered from the three theological virtues that give the soul life. Or the death of the soul is considered to be something that awaits all the damned, but will occur only at the Last Judgment—an interpretation of *la seconda morte* that is found in many Dante commentaries.

However, *Inferno* also contains an etiology of the soul’s death that is in many respects parallel to Statius’s etiology of its birth. The episode in question is that of the Forest of the Suicides, in *Inferno* 13. The verbal clue initially alerting the reader to the connection of *Inferno* 13 with *Purgatorio* 25 is the word “stizzo” (brand) which occurs in both of these cantos (*Inf.* 13.40 and *Purg.* 25.23), and nowhere else in the poem. Dante the Wayfarer has expressed astonishment arising from the extremely emaciated appearance of the souls of the Gluttonous, on the sixth cornice of Purgatory, giving rise to the question: how can flesh (or what appears to be flesh) be so mortified when it has no need of nourishment? As a preamble to Statius’s remarks, Virgil brings to mind the strange tale of Meleager, whose life was foretold to be coextensive with that of a brand withdrawn from the fire by his mother, as soon as she heard the prophecy. Virgil’s analogy may seem imprecise, but its point seems to be that the myth of



Meleager establishes that a human life can be affected by something having no physical connection with it, and therefore provides a paradigm for the starved appearance of souls that need no food.

The context in which Virgil presents this analogy is rich in symbolism. Dante's poetic persona has responded to the skeletal appearance of the souls, noting that "chi nel viso de li uomini legge 'omo' / ben avria quivi conosciuto l'emme" (*Purg.* 23.32–33). The structure of the human face exhibits inscription of the three-letter term that identifies the species, and in the skeletal souls of the Gluttonous, the middle letter of that term is unmistakably prominent. It is, of course, the same letter that, formed by myriad blessed souls in Paradise (*Par.* 18.72–108), will be transformed into the imperial bird emblematic of Roman power.<sup>2</sup>

The prominence of this M suggests that before Dante recognizes or acknowledges any particular human identity in any of these souls, he perceives in all of them the inscribed evidence of their spiritual destiny<sup>3</sup>—a point of particular importance, in view of the far-reaching rehabilitation of Forese Donati and, even more, of Dante's relations with him, that is undertaken in *Purgatorio* 23 and 24. What passed between Dante and Forese in their Florentine days, in the form of writing, is here and elsewhere recouped, almost word for word, in the form of speech, as the newly creative power of the spoken word comes to erase the imprisoning bonds forged by writing. The idea of an intensity of address that overpowers the overt force of the written word is vigorously developed in *Purgatorio* 22, where Statius twice invokes, using words implying speech ("chiamè," "dicesti"), the living communicative force, for him, of what seemed to be no more than "texts" of Virgil's (*Purg.* 22.3–42, and 67–72).<sup>4</sup> The verbal bond thus formed between these two Roman poets is developed further by the inverted tree of *Purg.* 22.130–154, which seems to have been placed where it is specifically for them (unlike the tree of *Purg.* 24.100–126, which both attracts and dismisses unsatisfied the Christian souls of the Gluttonous): "Li due poeti a l'albero s'appressaro; / e una voce per entro le fronde / gridò: 'Di questo cibo avrete caro'" (*Purg.* 22.129–141).

As the multiple Latin and Italian wordplay on "caro" suggests,<sup>5</sup> it is an irony, tragic in one case and happy in the other, that governs the experience of both of these poets, mapping out a ground upon which the Word made flesh, and the flesh so mortified as to be reduced almost to word, can simultaneously be glimpsed by the reader. The word that at once

conveys fleshliness and abstinence (“caro”) defines the transitional purgatorial ground that will make Virgil’s reference to Meleager meaningful. In this world that inverts the values and relationships of the physical universe, the example of a physical object whose treatment determines the course of a life can readily symbolize a hidden life whose course determines a physical image. The voice that calls from among the leaves of the inverted tree illustrates this motif in its compound use of the two Virgilian texts imperfectly paraphrased by Statius: “Lo secol primo, quant’oro fu bello” (*Purg.* 22.148) makes it clear that what attracts us to a thing and makes it beautiful is not what gives it life—especially in the light of the words that follow, which explicitly separate the virtues of the first age from its *aureate* beauty. The implications of this idea for the explanation of the soul’s origin that follows in Canto 25, and for the highly condensed but fertile discussion of poetics that comes between in Canto 24, will be considered below.

The analogy with Meleager’s life, coextensive with that of the burning brand, is only half of Virgil’s attempt to answer Dante’s question. He presents a second analogy, to the correspondence between the movements of human beings and those of their mirror images. The slipperiness of this ground was of course a literary commonplace, and it is specifically acknowledged in *Par.* 3.10–18, where Dante describes his persona’s mistaken understanding of what he was seeing in these words: “per ch’io dentro a l’error contrario corsi / a quel ch’accese amor tra l’omo e ’l fonte.” The classic narcissistic error, in this example, is to take a (necessarily false) image for the truth, and the “contrary error,” no less narcissistic, is to take truth to be a mere image. Virgil’s analogy is not concerned with such relations of truth and its mirror image, however: it requires only the inevitability of connection between the image in the mirror and the person physically separated from it. But in this analogy to the condition of the Gluttonous in Purgatory, the carnal element of comparison seems to have changed places with its intangible other, since it is the impalpable image of the fleshly human that reflects changes originating in the mirrored body, whereas the apparent wasted flesh of Forese’s astral body is actually the impalpable reflection of the process being undergone by his penitent soul. In the first of Virgil’s examples, the consumption of a physical object is cause, and the wasting of a human life is effect; in the second, the actions of a living human are cause, and their replication by a mirror image is effect. The order of cause and effect in these analogies doesn’t

seem to matter to Virgil, whereas in Dante's Christian psychology, it is crucially important: the *Commedia's* major concern is to differentiate the truth from the false images of it that abound in every field of human endeavor, from politics to poetics.<sup>6</sup>

It is no surprise, then, to realize that "stizzo" has made a prior appearance in Hell, the home *par excellence* of false images of truth, although the significance of its occurrence forty verses into the infernal *via negativa* of the suicides remains to be explored. *Inferno* 13 begins with the word "Non," followed, within the first three tercets, by five more negatives (four "non" and one "nessun"). As in other parts of Dante's Hell, there is no rational heuristic available for exploration, and here, even the human or humanoid personages who can normally provide a key to understanding are not to be glimpsed. It is a landscape apparently void of informative signs ("che da nessun sentiero era segnato," 13.3). Moreover, it is a classical landscape, featuring creatures from classical mythology (by way of the *Aeneid*)—a landscape in which Virgil clearly feels himself to be the more knowledgeable, and where Dante describes his confusion with a word ("smarrito") that connects it with his dismay in a prior dismal wood, where he cried out for help that was manifested in the form of Virgil, in the poem's opening canto. Like the situation in *Purgatorio* 25, where Virgil will assume that Dante does not entertain the thoughts his guide would like him to ("Se t'ammentassi come . . . / . . . / . . . / e se pensassi come . . ." (*Purg.* 25.22–25), Virgil here assumes knowledge of Dante's thoughts, saying "Se tu tronchi / qualche fraschetta d'una d'este piante / li pensier c'hai si faran tutti monchi" (*Inf.* 13.28–30). But Dante's poetic voice suggests that this assumption is false ("Cred'io ch'ei credette ch'io credesse," 13.25): the subjunctive form of the third verb implies that, whatever Dante the Wayfarer was thinking at this point, it was not that the laments he heard came from the voices of people hidden among the deformed shrubbery of the wood). What, then, was in his mind when, at Virgil's instigation, he broke a small branch off a great thorn bush, causing the soul of Pier della Vigna to break into speech?

The Wayfarer knows as a matter of course that he is in a "Virgilian" landscape: the Harpies nesting in the trees, and the oblique reference to the third book of the *Aeneid*, make that abundantly evident; but it is clear that the wonderment expressed at the sheer improbability of this setting, and of the hidden phenomenon that it enshrines, is more Virgil's than Dante's.<sup>7</sup> It is Virgil who refers to "cose che torrien fede al mio sermone,"

and Virgil who says to the offended soul of Pier della Vigna “la cosa incredibile mi fece / indurlo ad ovra ch’a me stesso pesa” (13.50–51). The source of the Wayfarer’s “smarrimento” is given as “Io sentia d’ogni parte trarre guai, / e non vedea persona che ’l facesse” (22–23). His confusion and dismay, then, arise from the phenomenon of human cries of pain and distress in the absence of any *person* to whom they could be ascribed. This seems to indicate that he is already aware that he is in the presence of damned souls whose personhood has been destroyed,<sup>8</sup> but who pathetically retain human powers of feeling and expression. It seems that these souls, imprisoned as they are within the grotesque plants, nonetheless have the power to produce moans and other sounds of pain, without any breaking of their bosky involucrum; but such laceration seems to be a necessary precondition to the production of speech. Moreover, the emergence of speech is accompanied by that of blood (“Da che fu fatto poi di sangue bruno, / ricominciò a dir” (34–35), and “sí de la scheggia rotta usciva insieme / parole e sangue” (43–44), a phenomenon implying a grave and fundamental disruption of the constitution of the human soul.

In Statius’s account of the origin of the human soul,<sup>9</sup> blood figures only in the most elementary stage of the soul’s development: male blood, after a series of digestions that purify it, unites with female blood to form a human embryo (interestingly, the verb used by Statius to designate this action, “game” (*Purg.* 25.44), occurs also at *Inf.* 13.41, where it denotes the sound made by the green brand in the fire, as the vapor escapes from it). This union of bloods initiates the process resulting in the production of the sensitive and vegetative soul. But speech is, and can only be, a product of the immortal intellectual soul that arises from no natural process, but is inbreathed by the divine afflatus (*Purg.* 25.61–75).<sup>10</sup> The soul of lower order, although the vessel of this divinely created soul, is uninvolved in its formation, and has no part in its distinctive identity, even though such lower faculties as the operation of the senses, usually identified with this soul, and nominally corporeal, are also held to depend upon the rational soul, being merely articulated through the body. The language used by Statius suggests that a significant and fundamental feature of the rational soul’s identity is the capacity for speech, since he uses the terms “animal” and “fante,” respectively, to designate the soul of lower order formed by nature and the rational soul formed by God. The first word denotes a creature animated by the vital spirits, and possessing procreative and sensitive capacities, whereas the latter denotes a creature that

speaks. The emergence of words and blood together<sup>11</sup> from the bough broken by Dante offers a first dramatic attestation of the disordering of the suicide's soul, by showing the crude intermingling of things that are not only effectively the first and last elements in the soul's formation, but also belong, respectively, to two different orders of soul.<sup>12</sup>

Troublesome as such confusion is, it is only the beginning of the extraordinary situation revealed by Pier della Vigna, for when, in response to Virgil's question, he explains how the suicide's soul comes to be enclosed in such a tangled growth, he compares it to a seed from which the grotesque plant grows. Thus the sublime end-product of the process described by Statius in *Purgatorio* 25—the immortal, rational soul—astonishingly becomes the seed of an organism not only at the bottom of the hierarchy of souls, but malformed within its category. If this is not the discreation of the human soul, in terms of Statius's description of its generation in *Purg.* 25, it is dangerously close to it. The description of the suicide's plight, even without taking account of what he says, or the language in which he says it, is sufficiently horrific to alert Dante's reader to something in the order of creation that has gone terribly wrong, but it is only the light retrospectively cast upon this episode by *Purgatorio* 25 that displays how far wrong, and how deeply disturbing to the work of creation, the suicide's act is. The soul that has emerged from the hand of God, uniquely endowed with the capacity to seek truth, has degenerated into the source of the crassest and most grotesque kind of materialism, fodder for the Harpies, grim harbingers of future misfortune (and, ultimately, of damnation—"tristo annunzio di futuro danno"). It is the more surprising, then, that both Pier della Vigna and the anonymous Florentine whose words conclude the canto, not only retain the capacity for speech, but are also able to speak with elegance and (in the case of the latter) with prophetic power. How is such speech to be understood?<sup>13</sup>

Pier's first words to the poets, after the lacerated limb of his dendritic body has exuded blood, introduce an extraordinary parallel that will be taken up with protracted and horrific explicitness in Cantos 24 and 25 of *Inferno*, where Dante describes the punishment of the thieves. He says, "Per ché mi serpi?/ non hai tu spiro di pietà alcuno? / Uomini fummo, e or siam fatti sterpi: / ben dovrebb'esser la tua man più pia, / se state fossimo anime di serpi" (*Inf.* 13.35–39). The comparison of men with serpents works on two levels: Pier's awareness of the conventional hierarchy of souls places snakes at the opposite (and lower) pole from humans,

but at the same time draws attention to the Serpent in Eden, which exhibits human intelligence and superhuman guile, as well (to draw an inference from the punishment adjudged to it in Genesis) as stature far superior to that of its descendants. Pier's speech will continue to dwell on parallels with animals, in such language as "Sì col dolce dir m'adeschi" and "perch'io un poco a ragionar m'inveschi" (*Inf.* 13.55–57)—two instances of comparison of himself with hunted birds; but the implied analogy to the serpent is the most significant.

One might perhaps expect that in the undoing of the human soul that *Inferno* progressively reveals, speech and thought would be among the most vital elements to be lost, signaling the destruction of what, if Statius's account is to be believed, is most profoundly and uniquely indicative of the human (as differentiated from the animal and vegetative) soul. But if thought and speech are to be understood as the capacities that distinctively equip the soul to apprehend the truth, their deterioration into mechanisms for deception and self-deception is an even more telling manifestation of the degeneration of being as the human collapses into the animal and sensual—not the merely animal and sensual, but the animality and sensuality of the edenic serpent, which perversely uses its wit to belie its creator. The retention of speech by the damned develops to its ultimate the dead-ended materialism that befogs the truth and substitutes misleading images for it, and in this way, it reflects in an extreme form the difficulty of seeking and articulating truth in a world of images. Satan is the paradigmatic artist of misrepresentation in locating the possibility of human apotheosis in the consumption of a fruit, and Pier della Vigna, seeking to invoke his unwitting tormentor's pity by intimating the horror of reducing even a soul of the lowest animal order to the merely vegetative state, ironically refers indirectly to the more horrific anomaly of a rational soul of highest order, functioning in accord with the dictates of diabolical hubris.<sup>14</sup> Pier della Vigna appears to have promised himself something like the opposite of what Satan promised Eve (i.e., oblivion rather than godlike knowledge), but the promise is comparably false and, himself both tempter and victim, he assumes both their roles. In the canto of the Suicides and in those of the Thieves, Dante adopts and permutes the elements of the primal temptation in the Garden of Eden—Human, Tree, and Serpent—to identify successive phases in the representation of the human soul's corruption. In the paradigmatic story, the human agent is seduced by the voice of the Serpent, which carries the articulation of

desire for a fatal object identified with the Tree. Although the human, the forbidden tree, and the serpent are, and remain, mutually distinct, there are already sources for the fusion of these elements in the serpent's adoption of human language and the attraction of the human to the tree.<sup>15</sup> The suicide, on the other hand, is wholly *enclosed* in the grotesquely deformed shrub, and so is formally unified with the archetypal object of desire, now transformed into an object of loathing. His instinctive identification of himself with the serpent makes him simultaneously the Tempter who lays claim to godlike knowledge and the victim of incomprehensible divine wrath. Here human and plant are entirely confused, or rather, fused, to the Wayfarer's consternation, and Pier della Vigna, recognizing himself to have lost the name *man*, is able to wonder whether he would be found more worthy of pity if he were a snake.

Desire still lives in the soul of the suicide, and governs the pathetic residue of his self-concept. But the thieves' dizzying exchanges and interchanges of physical form with snakes intimate a confusion of being in which the original story has been radically restructured as an Ovidian ontology of transformation. The motif of theft is nominally dominant, and seen from this point of view, the original sin appears to be more clearly restructured as the theft of authority and identity ("ye will be like gods . . ."). Consequently, the tree and the temptation arising from it have disappeared, and what remains is an interaction of human and serpent that nominally preserves the primordial structure of cause and effect without reference to the fatal sin that links them. (Serpents attack and strike the humans, with the resulting destruction of their human form, and—commonly—the usurpation of their place by the serpents.)

There is a first hint of this situation in the oblique reference to resurrection through mention of the phoenix. The two tercets describing the life cycle of the phoenix (*Inf.* 24.106–111) seem out of place, so different are they lexically, syntactically, phonetically, and thematically from what precedes and what follows them. The account begins with a curious indirection ("Così per li gran savi si confessa"), as if the ensuing words articulated a mystery or an exotic tale that the great sages were reluctant to divulge (and perhaps, to believe). "Così" implies a parallel between the sinner's swift and complete incineration, and ensuing reconstitution from the ashes to which he has been reduced, and the phoenix's self-immolation and rebirth. But such a parallel is bound to shock the reader, since the phoenix was an obvious figuration of Christ, through precisely the

features mentioned, and the sinner in question, Vanni Fucci, whose appearance upon the stage of the *Inferno* will conclude with a strikingly obscene and blasphemous gesture, seems to be as unchristlike a figure as could be imagined.<sup>16</sup> The serpent bites the sinner at the point where the neck is joined to the shoulders, so that the bite separates the head, the seat of the imperishable rational soul,<sup>17</sup> from the rest of the body, and the rapidity of the ensuing transformation is described by reference to the writing of the word *io* in reverse (“Né O sí tosto mai né I si scrisse,” *Inf.* 24.100), intimating the undoing of the self that takes place. What then ensues is a mockery of the divine creation of the first human, since here the “dust of the earth” gathers itself together to constitute a humanoid figure with no question of divine intervention. The sacred Christian myth of death and resurrection emblemized by the phoenix,<sup>18</sup> and occurring in strictly measured sacral history (“quando al cinquecentesimo anno appressa,” *Inf.* 24.108) is contrasted with a mocking parody of the destruction of human immortality by the serpent, and of its restoration by the agency of divine mercy and self-sacrifice.

Unlike Vanni Fucci, who has rejected what it is to be human, and speaks of himself as a beast, Pier della Vigna exhibits an entirely different kind of self-concept that indirectly betrays awareness of precisely the trust whose violation resulted in his eternal fate. The way he identifies himself (*Inf.* 13.58–61) not only tells the reader who he was, but in so doing, confirms the idea intimated by his choice of metaphors and language. Like the anonymous Florentine whose words close the canto, he is never named, but unlike that Florentine, he is securely identified for the reader beyond any possibility of doubt. The words “Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi / del cor di Federigo” identify the speaker as the chancellor of Frederick II, but the first verse more immediately brings to mind the disciple named for the rock on which Christ would establish his church, and the keys entrusted to him.

The association of St. Peter with the vine that metaphorically represents the Church is made explicit in *Par.* 18.130–132, in Dante’s apostrophe to Pope John XXII: “Ma tu che sol per cancellare scrivi, / pensa che Pietro e Paolo, che moriro / per la vigna che guasti, ancor son vivi.” In a subtle and entirely inexplicit textual maneuver, the Peter of the Vine whom Christ chose to be his Vicar upon earth becomes a shadowy precursor of the unnamed Peter of the Vine that Dante finds in hell. This is figuralism turned upon its head, in a chiasmus that sets the two Peters



back to back at its center and, at its extremes, the imperishable Church against the immortal soul of the suicide—for the vine entrusted to the care of Frederick II's Chancellor was his own immortal soul. The conventional relation of figure and fulfillment is overthrown in the moral economy of Hell, which drains substance from the damned (a notion appropriately expressed for the first time in connection with the souls of the Gluttonous: "Sopra lor vanità che par persona," *Inf.* 6.6).<sup>19</sup>

Of course, Pier della Vigna, in saying "Io son colui che tenni . . . ," is speaking metaphorically, but Dante's ending the verse with *ambo le chiavi* leaves the statement suspended between literality and metaphoricity, intimating the immense irony of a comparison between entry into the kingdom of heaven and possession of the secrets of a human heart. Moreover, the "literal" element here (the keys of St. Peter) is itself metaphorical, designating the power to grant or deny admission to the kingdom of heaven. Pier della Vigna will now be seen to be one of a quartet of figures in the *Commedia* that Dante has explicitly endowed (or has so designed as to make them think themselves endowed) with such power. The third of these figures is Pope Boniface VIII, whom Guido da Montefeltro, in the account of his downfall reports as saying: "Lo ciel poss'io serrare e disserrare, / come tu sai; però son due le chiavi / che 'l mio antecessor non ebbe care" (*Inf.* 27.103–105). The figure of *two* keys, one to lock and (a presumably different) one to unlock, is particularly striking, implying as it does that neither of these actions is simply the reverse of the other, performable by the same instrument. Boniface, claiming that he is unlocking the door for Guido—who realizes that if he gives the advice requested, it will be locked against him—, actually locks it (as the logic of the "nero cherubino" (114–120), makes perfectly clear), as if he had mixed up the two keys, or their functions. In the case of the fourth such figure, the gatekeeper of the Mountain of Purgatory (*Purg.* 9.116–129), the two keys, one of gold and the other of silver, have complementary functions but a single objective, since both are required to unlock the gate.

The differences are significant. Repentance, which is for a living Christian the key to the "reversibility" of an act conducive to damnation, is unavailable to the damned, so the image of the second key, or of the key that can be turned backward in its wards, is entirely delusive where they are concerned. The keys that Pope Boniface thinks of as two are functionally only one, and the operation of that single key is precisely the reverse

of what Boniface claims (and wills) it to be. The keys thus function metaphorically to represent the soul's power over itself—which is the power to work its own salvation or damnation (to disregard, for the sake of the immediate argument, the vital importance of grace in achieving the former). Pier della Vigna, softly manipulating the keys that lock and unlock *Frederick's* heart, arrogates to himself a godlike power, but is unhappily unaware of its analogy to the power he holds over his own heart, and its vital importance for the determination of his eternal fate. Not only is the divine subsumed here by the merely human; knowledge of another is assumed to be possible without self-knowledge, and preferable to it.

The extended figure of speech centered on the keys, accordingly, begins to make manifest the parallel between Pier della Vigna and the edenic serpent, and what follows seems almost to function as an account (from Lucifer's point of view, of course) of Lucifer's downfall from heaven, provoked by the envy of peers, rather than his own presumption.<sup>20</sup> Finally, in passing a death-sentence upon himself ("Ingiusto fece me contra me giusto," *Inf.* 13.72), Pier not only usurps the Emperor's privilege, but effectively reenacts, with much higher stakes, what Frederick has already done by casting him into prison. The court of heaven has become the court of Frederick II, dominated by "la meretrice (Invidia)," that, along with "Superbia" (Lucifer's original sin) and "Avarizia," rules the cities that have become a hell on earth (*Inf.* 6.74–75). In the light of this grim transmogrification of the heavenly polity into the ruinously corrupted polity of the fallen world, Pier's oath never to have broken faith with his lord, "per le nuove radici d'esto legno" (*Inf.* 13.73), is bitterly ironic, since those "novel roots" are nothing less than the immortal human soul, directly created by the Lord of Heaven, and destined to dwell eternally in his kingdom; and a mortal prince, an egregious example of those in whom none should place trust (Psalm 146:3), has taken the place of the Lord of Heaven.

From this point in the narrative of *Inferno* 13, the Emperor is a scarcely active presence, identified first by the general and abstract name "Cesare," and a couple of lines later, by the only slightly less abstract "Augusto," a passive figure inflamed by those themselves inflamed by Envy. The consequence of this process is described in an impersonal fashion, as if the Emperor had played no rôle at all in bringing it about: "Che i lieti onor tornaro in tristi lutti" (*Inf.* XIII, 69). Pier della Vigna in Frederick II's prison, like the newly-fallen Lucifer in Hell, like Francesca da Rimini and

so many others of the damned in Dante's *Inferno*, is in an entirely self-enclosed world that seems to exclude the possibility of external causes arising from the agency of a greater power. It is in this solipsistically confined circle that he can say, in a savage parody of the Holy Trinity's mutual and reflexive relations within and among its triune personhood, "L'animo mio per disdegnoso gusto, / Credendo col morir fuggir disdegno, / Ingiusto fece me contra me giusto" (*Inf.* 13.70–72). When, only a verse or two later, Pier della Vigna says of Frederick, "che fu d'onor sí degno" (75), he appears to be thinking of himself as one with the Emperor. Whose disdain, after all, does he seek to flee by dying? Natalino Sapegno, observing that "D'altra parte il *disdegno*, che il suicida vuol *fuggire* colla morte, non esprime una condizione interna, bensì una realtà oggettiva; e cioè il disprezzo e lo scherno del mondo circostante,"<sup>21</sup> expresses the generally accepted understanding of this line, but the involution of the entire phrase suggests that the divided soul of Pier della Vigna disdainfully seeks to escape the disdain of his imperial lord, which is, in effect, his own disdain, in analogy with the way it enacts an unjust judgment upon itself. The disdain of the "surrounding world" is not excluded, but the psychology of the events and feelings described is fully internalized and self-referential, as the consequence of an illicit judgment on faulty grounds, passed by the soul upon itself.

Pier della Vigna was wrong about the "justice" of his own soul, as Singleton's analysis of the idea of "justification" makes clear.<sup>22</sup> However, the justice of the soul can only be determined by a Judge separate from the soul being judged, and it is precisely this kind of judgment that Pier is unable to admit or acknowledge. In this respect, his situation (and that of the other damned in Hell) is radically different from that of the souls in Purgatory, who, having opened themselves to judgment and correction by the Judge, are engaged in the painful processes of justification. This difference may perhaps be illustrated further by the possible wordplay on "stizzo" and "stizza" (anger). "Al consumar d'un *stizzo*" (*Purg.* 25.23) may perhaps intimate a disappearance of the sinner's wrath as complete as that of the brand consumed, whereas "Come d'un *stizzo* verde ch'arso sia" (*Inf.* 13.40) seems to suggest in the incomplete and smoky smoldering of the green brand the indefinite protraction of a wrath still ungoverned. In each case, there is a pattern of contrast between irresolution and resolution, but the poles of the contrast in Purgatory are reversed in Hell. The concrete physical representation of Pier della Vigna's eternal fate is rigid,

unyielding, brittle, whereas the moral condition intimated by his language and the figure defining his capacity for speech seems still to be in flux—pathetically, since it can no longer make any difference. In the case of the purgatorial souls, it is just the opposite: the moral situation is fully (and favorably) resolved, and all else, in consequence, is fluid and dynamic.

This contrast is sometimes markedly represented through the self-awareness of the pilgrim who travels through both realms, and nowhere, perhaps, more notably than through his encounters with Forese Donati and Brunetto Latini, which display striking linguistic similarity—to such an extent that it is hard to imagine that Dante did not intend the description of his recognition of Forese to recall that of Brunetto. The former reads:

ed ecco del profondo de la testa  
volse a me li occhi un'ombra e guardò fiso;  
poi gridò forte: "Qual grazia m'è questa?"

Mai non l'avrei riconosciuto al viso;  
ma ne la voce sua mi fu palese  
ciò che l'aspetto in sé avea conquiso.

Questa favilla tutta mi raccese  
mia conoscenza a la cangiata labbia,<sup>23</sup>  
e ravvisai la faccia di Forese.

(*Purg.* 23.40–48)

The recognition of Brunetto Latini is described in these terms:

Così adocchiato da cotal famiglia,  
fui conosciuto da un, che mi prese  
per lo lembo e gridò: "Qual meraviglia!"

E io, quando 'l suo braccio a me distese,  
ficcai li occhi per lo cotto aspetto,  
sí che 'l viso abbrusciato non difese

la conoscenza sua al mio intelletto;  
e chinando la mano a la sua faccia,  
rispuosi: "Siete voi qui, ser Brunetto?"

(*Inf.* 15.22–30)

The many parallels, common words and even metaphors, between the two passages may serve to make their differences even more marked. The Pilgrim recognizes Forese only by his voice,<sup>24</sup> but Brunetto, by his

appearance; and when Brunetto's appearance is recognized, the recognition is *intellectual*, more the product of reasoning than of familiarity, cognition, perhaps, at least as much as recognition. The poignant reciprocal motions of Brunetto's arm stretched out to touch Dante's garment, and of Dante's arm lowered to touch Brunetto's face, are reminiscent of the dramatic scene of Isaac's blessing in Genesis (27:1–40): the sense of touch is readily deceived, but the sense of hearing is not. "The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob." Isaac, who realizes the discrepancy between the two, acts in accord with the evidence of deception, doing the right thing for the wrong reason. The parallel is an instructive one, for Brunetto, who calls Dante "figlio," has truly been a blind father to him, one whose patrimony, unlike that of Isaac, is contradicted by the example of his life.

Dante, seeing the shades of Forese and Brunetto, respectively, sees their souls, which he has not seen before. Voice, which does not lie (as opposed to speech, which all too often does), reveals Forese to him as the bared soul, assimilated to the condition of all humanity as it purges from itself the dross of sin, cannot; but the voice of Brunetto, still wrapped in pride and self-conceit, like Ulysses' cowl of fire ("catun si fascia di quel ch'elli è inceso," *Inf.* 26.48), cannot reveal him to Dante, and what Dante, reasoning out the condition of the scorched shade before him, reads with shocked understanding, is the true state of Brunetto's soul. This realization finally provides a counterpart to Brunetto's recognition of Dante, also difficult, although for different reasons. Dante's poetic persona, a pilgrim still *in via*, is always recognizable, even though his living presence in the other world is astonishing and requires explanation. In this he is entirely unlike the dead who, reduced to nakedness of soul clothed by astral bodies wholly emblematic of their spiritual conditions, have to be seen with a differently attuned eye and mind.

Another way to interpret this difference, and a key to understanding the relation between these two passages, is provided by the seemingly strange metaphor used by Virgil to request Statius's forthcoming explanation of Dante's doubt: "Ecco qui Stazio; e io lui chiamo e prego / che sia or sanator de le tue piage" (*Purg.* 25.29–30). Virgil has (perhaps unconsciously) assimilated Dante to the condition of Forese and, more distantly, to that of Brunetto. There were in both cases metaphorical wounds: Brunetto had been Dante's teacher in Florence, and his collocation in Hell for sodomy leaves an opening for speculation (pursued by some Dante

critics<sup>25</sup>) as to whether sexual advances may have entered into his relations with Dante. And Dante had notoriously indulged in a scurrilous poetic *tenzone* with Forese, for which he elaborately atones in his extensive rehabilitation of Forese's wife Nella (in *Purg.* 23.85–96, whom he had seriously maligned in those sonnets. Dante had clearly done much himself to heal these “wounds”; Statius's contribution to the process is to show how the soul makes manifest its own passions and sufferings, and ultimately comes to recognize and take responsibility for them. As in virtually all of the punishments of Hell and Purgatory, the “wounds” of the soul are represented by physical correlatives, but in the two episodes I have been examining, a like problem of physical recognition is generated by two very different kinds of punishment. In both instances, the distinctive features that normally constitute the basis of recognition are ravaged to such an extent that semblance is destroyed. In one case, they are burned away; in the other, eaten away by “starvation.” But there is of course a more fundamental difference: Brunetto's wounds, like those of all the sinners in Hell, are physical correlatives of his spiritual blemishes, and so, bespeak the deformities of his soul, whereas Forese's wounds, like those of all the shades in Purgatory, are physical correlatives of the spiritual cleansing that reveals his authentic beauty of soul.

Two episodes in *Inferno*, accordingly, show how the damned soul clothes itself in its own deceptions, whose dominant, although not unique, vehicle is language. The truth so disguised is individual and unique, but its import is universal. Against those, a single episode in *Purgatorio* illustrates how the nakedness of the soul functions as a conduit to truth. The truth so revealed is universal, but its imprint is individual.

With this much in mind, the cumulative effect of the Wayfarer's encounters with both Brunetto Latini and Forese Donati, closely bounded as they are by his meeting with Pier della Vigna, on the one hand, and Statius's exposition of the soul's origin, on the other, can be considered as preparation for the brief but pithy remarks about poetics that arise from his meeting with Bonagiunta Orbicciani of Lucca in *Purgatorio* 24.<sup>26</sup>

This meeting is the central episode in the series of cantos (*Purg.* 21–26) that report Dante's meetings and interactions with various poets, from Statius to Arnaut Daniel. The thematic concern with the relation of being-as-poet to being-as-person is first enunciated through the treatment of Statius's relation with Virgil. “Per te poeta fui, per te cristiano” (*Purg.* 22.73) places Virgil's mediation of Statius's development as poet and of

his adoption of Christianity on a single level, making these epochs in the later poet's life, separated in chronological time, simultaneous in "il memorar presente." The theme is more complexly taken up again in Dante's interaction with Forese, where the former's reconceptualization of his being as poet is able to subsume the tension of his former relations with Forese, in an otherworldly reconciliation.<sup>27</sup> The core of our poet's exchange with Bonagiunta is anticipated in his general question to Forese as to the identity and noteworthiness of the other souls staring at him. His language "Dimmi s'io veggio da notar persona" (*Purg.* 24.11) anticipates that of Bonagiunta's question to him "dì s'i' veggio qui . . ." (49) as well as the thematic concerns with "notation" and "personhood," and the text in verses 34–36 makes it clear that Dante and Bonagiunta have already taken note of each other before any words pass between them.<sup>28</sup>

The imperfection of Bonagiunta's first exchange with Dante underscores, by contrast, the clarity of Dante's immediately preceding interaction with Forese: "El mormorava; e non so che 'Gentucca' / sentiv'io là, ov'el sentia la piaga / de la giustizia che sí li pilucca" (*Purg.* 24.37–39). This murmuring is not obviously speech meant to be heard or understood, and the verb *sentire* is used twice in one line to denote two altogether different sensory impressions. Hence the Wayfarer's injunction (40–42) so to speak as to ensure understanding on the part of the person addressed, with the resulting satisfaction of both speaker and listener. These verses are concerned with rhetorical strategies, and their relation to the responsibilities for the creation of understanding that devolve upon both of the parties to a conversation; but they also form a part of the larger topic of poetics that is at issue. Bonagiunta's reply (43–48) evinces a clear preference for an oracular mode of speech that seeks to defer understanding by making it wait upon events. The partially submerged theme of exile had already been mooted in Forese's identification of this speaker as "Bonagiunta, / Bonagiunta da Lucca" (19–20), a man knowable by his citizenship, as Dante no longer was, or would be, after his exile from Florence, and it continues in Bonagiunta's prophecy. The question "Ma dì s'i' veggio qui . . .," then, comes after two opposing sets of opinions, expressed and implied, about identity, authenticity, and responsibility in verbal communication, have been articulated. Bonagiunta, comfortable in his civic identity, seems to think in corporate terms that tend to deny or at least mute the assertion of individuality towards which Dante's poetic persona is moving (thus, a few verses farther on,

and after hearing Dante's "I' mi son un," he addresses him using the second-person plural *le vostre penne*, wholly identifying Dante's poetic achievements with those of his supposed school).

Bonagiunta's repeated emphasis on *seeing* ("di s'i' veggio; issa vegg'io; Io veggio ben") moves rapidly through three successive objects: the man before him ("colui"), the knot ("il nodo"), and the fact ("come le vostre penne"), intimating that *seeing* is for him the culmination of the process of understanding. In what Dante says to Forese at the beginning of this episode *seeing* is antecedent to *taking note*, which is itself, if we attend to what he says in vv. 52–54, an intermediate stage in the poet's production of meaningful signs. If seeing is for Bonagiunta the endpoint of the process that generates understanding, it is for Dante the starting-point of the process that leads to the production of poetry.

The question asked by Bonagiunta in vv. 49–51 conceives that process in terms akin to those formulated by Dante in the *Vita Nuova* to describe the change in his poetry initiated by *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*. It has been pointed out that the use in v. 50 of the verb "trasse" seems to echo Bonagiunta's earlier charge against Guido Guinizelli (in the sonnet *Voi, ch'avete mutata la mainera*) that he made "audacious incursions into learning unsuited to poetry" ("traier canson per forza di scrittura").<sup>29</sup> But the meaning of "trasse" in *Purg.* 24.50, seems rather different. "Fore / trasse" seems to suggest either that the "new rhymes" were already present in another (unidentified) medium, and needed only to be brought forth—without, in this instance, any suggestion of violence—or that they had already been created, and perhaps circulated, privately, and that Dante was responsible for first bringing them to public knowledge. In either case, Dante's function is apparently viewed as maieutic rather than creative. Indeed, the contrast drawn by Bonagiunta in vv. 58–60 suggests that, if anything, he, the Notary (Giacomo da Lentino), and Guittone (d'Arezzo) were the freer and more creative spirits, whereas Dante and the other *stilnovisti* were strict followers of Love's "dictates." Although this conclusion seems quite satisfactory to Bonagiunta, who falls silent "quasi contentato," it doesn't apparently merit any response from Dante, who returns his attention to Forese.

It is of course the tercet that lies between Bonagiunta's question and his conclusion that merits and has attracted the most attention and discussion.<sup>30</sup> The text reads: "E io a lui: 'I' mi son un che, quando / Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo / ch'e' ditta dentro vo significando'" (*Purg.*



24.52–54). It has been well noted that the personification of Love in this tercet as a source of in-spiration is analogous to the place and function of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity, and the analogy is reinforced by the words “I mi son un.” The apparently reflexive pronoun “mi,” which has received much commentary, appears to be pleonastic, but its inclusion is what makes it possible to read the entire four-word phrase as an allusion to the Trinity, with the first three words, all referring to the grammatical first person, culminating in an expression of unity (“un”)<sup>31</sup>.

Reference to Statius’s discourse on the soul’s origin in the following canto does much to illuminate the trinitarian analogy made here. Statius, as previously noted, distinguishes the intellectual soul from the sensitive and vegetative soul as “fante” and “animal,” respectively (*Purg.* 25.61), and does so by arguing that the soul endowed with reason and capable of speech is formed directly by the Creator, unlike the embryonically generated lower orders of soul. The distinctive activity of this highest order of soul is denoted in v. 75 by the words “sé in sé rigira.” It appears to be such reflexivity—the capacity to contemplate and understand one’s own intellectual processes—that is the core of the analogy between human beings and their Creator.<sup>32</sup> In the case of the Holy Trinity, as noted above, Love is to be identified with the Holy Spirit, which, like the Son, proceeds from the Father and which effectively mediates the mutual love of Father and Son.<sup>33</sup> In *Purg.* 24.52–54, however, Love is not the mediator of the reflexive activity implied by “I mi son un” that establishes a just proportion among the parts of the human soul, but is the principle of analogy that establishes a proportion between the human soul and its Creator.

It is not only possible, then, but highly likely, that what the poet notes when Love dictates within is a structure of relation, the form of the analogy between the world and its mortal creatures, and God, rather than, as Bonagiunta seems to think, a “scrittura,” or text. Another way to think of this distinction will recall what was previously noted about the reference to the Golden Age in *Purgatorio* 22: it is a contrast between the aesthetic of images, which still governs Bonagiunta’s thinking, and what Warren Ginsberg calls the aesthetic of being that now governs Dante’s. At this point in Dante’s pilgrimage, he records the culmination of his long-standing reflections on the conditions that make the production of a poetry of truth possible at all.<sup>34</sup>

The making of signs is itself a human activity that represents the creative activity of God—*per analogiam*, and the poet's medium for this activity is language. At the same time—*per analogiam*—God's medium for the production of human language is the rational human soul. The signs made by God are imprinted upon the universe for humans to read, but the human interpreters of divine signs are themselves inscribed, not only with the marks of their own destinies, but in a fashion that makes them interpretable to one another.

The *Vita Nuova*, like much stilnovist poetry, concerns itself with the capacity of language to articulate the feelings of the vital and sensitive spirits of the soul. But in the *Divina Commedia*, poetic language reaches beyond such concerns to address the question of its own power “forti cose a pensar mettere in versi” (*Purg.* 29.42). The *Paradiso* is the record of Dante's unremitting effort to reverse the stilnovist practice of extrapolating the glories of heaven from supreme examples of earthly beauty, striving instead to discover in language that is necessarily accommodated to the discourses of the vital and sensitive spirits analogies for the supreme apprehensions of intellect. The carefully constructed contrast between the hylomorphic degeneration of a rational human soul, in *Inferno* 13, and the account of every soul's primordial constitution as a divinely-made thinking being, in *Purgatorio* 25, intimated by the repetition of the unusual word “stizzo,” offers a dramatic illustration of the profound gulf between the extreme conditions open to the rational human soul. It opposes to the image of the Word-become-Flesh, horrifically reduced to deformed vegetable matter, the idea of the newly reborn Flesh, poised to begin its epochal journey towards recovery of the Word.<sup>35</sup>

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## NOTES

1. The term *human soul*, as used in this essay, refers to the tripartite soul, vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual, whose distinctively human component comprises the faculties of intellect and will. Although it is only the intellectual soul that is distinctively and explicitly human, the more general term is used throughout, because so much of the following argument is concerned with relations among the different orders of soul.

2. Such commonality of the letter M gives rise to speculation as to the implied connection between the palindromic *omo* and the word *terram*. The account of creation in Genesis narrates that the first man was created from the dust of the earth, and *earth* and *man*, respectively, stand at the

beginning and end of the six-day *work* of creation. And the respective inscribed values of these two Gothic M's, *man* and *eagle*, are the creatures identified, respectively, with St. Luke and St. John—the former, a physician turned evangelist who is author of one of the synoptic gospels; the latter, an evangelist turned mystic who is considered by Dante the author of the Book of Revelation. All of this is only to suggest that, taken together, Dante's inscribed M's offer one of the poem's many intimations of the connection of the fleshly human with the mysteries of Revelation.

3. In the light of the considerations advanced in the preceding note, the celestial Eagle's discourse on the inscrutability of divine judgment in *Par.* 20 enhances the pertinence of this notion.

4. In *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the 'Comedy'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 258–261 (and Endnotes 72–74), Teodolinda Barolini argues persuasively that the revisionist strategies at work in the interpretation of the Vergilian texts cited here are placed in the service of Statius's development as a foil for Dante's Vergil.

5. "Caro" is a three-way pun, since it is a Latin word meaning *flesh* and an Italian word meaning *dear*, that is also, however—and this is its primary meaning here—, a rare Latinate noun connected with "carestia" (lack or shortage), and therefore, meaning "scarcity."

6. In *Dante, Poet of the Desert* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, 82), Giuseppe Mazzotta, discussing Dante's Ulysses, comments appositely: "For Dante the failure of political rhetoric does not depend simply on its inability to make crucial moral distinctions, but on something prior: the fundamental rupture between truth and a language which is caught up in the world of contingency. In this sense, fraud is not simply the sin of Ulysses, but the very condition of discourse."

7. As Mazzotta points out (op. cit., 189), "Dante renews the corresponding scene from the *Aeneid* [the story of Polydorus] by imposing on it a Christian perspective"—and in so doing, he places in Virgil's own mouth expression of the Roman poet's astonishment and perplexity at the Christian reworking of the myth that undermines his own *autoritas*. The context of Mazzotta's remarks on this canto is a discussion *in extenso* of Dante's complex Augustinian critique of the *Aeneid*'s implied conception of history.

8. There is an imputation, in the use of the word *persona*, that this very point is what escapes Virgil: the suicide who retains the power of speech after death *personat*, that is, makes sound, but as Christian ontology sees the matter, he has irrevocably destroyed his *person*, and so, *personat* in the sense of playing a part. Cf. *Inf.* 6.35–36: "ponavam le piante / sopra lor vanità che par persona."

9. The most thorough discussion of this account in its technical detail, and of its philosophical sources, is that of Bruno Nardi, *Studi di filosofia medievale* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1960), 9–68.

10. Nardi (op. cit., 65), seeking to reconcile this orthodox account of the soul's origin with Dante's placement of the alleged Averroist Siger of Brabant in Heaven (*Par.* 10.138), explains: "Al posto dell'intelletto separato, Dante sostituisce la luce divina che, raggiando sull'anima sensitiva, la eleva al grado di anima razionale."

11. Étienne Gilson's essay "Dante's Notion of a Shade: *Purgatorio* XXV," in *Mediaeval Studies* 25 (1967), 124–142, explains in some detail the difficulty experienced by medieval Christian theologians in explaining how the immaterial shades of the dead can suffer pain, see and hear, desire food, and so forth—especially since "there are no rationally justified shades in the universe of the Christian theologians" (141). He argues that Dante solved the problem by combining elements of Aristotelian "embryogeny" (as illustrated in Statius's exposition of the soul's origin in *Purgatorio* 25) with the poetic creations of Vergil in *Aeneid* 6. There is perhaps a more "naturalistic" explanation of the bleeding of Pier della Vigna's soul, however, since the deformed shrub that houses it in Hell can presumably exude blood as a plant exudes sap.

12. This situation is discussed by Richard Lansing, who interprets it as a descent upon the *scala naturae*, or chain of being (see "Dante's Concept of Violence and the Chain of Being," in *Dante Studies* 99 (1981), 67–87; present reference to pp. 75–76). He appositely cites (loc. cit.) John Carroll's book *Exiles of Eternity: An Exposition of Dante's Inferno* (New York: Gorham, 1904).

13. Although the canto of the Suicides is not mentioned in John Freccero's essay "Infernal Irony," in *Dante the Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 93–109, it would seem to be an example of prime importance for his argument,

since the conversion of the suicides' souls into deformed plants is an ultimate irony, in his sense. Freccero writes (106), "... Dante's irony turns ... souls into bodies ...," and a series of his formulations of this idea speak directly to this episode ("The ordinary dynamism of language is turned back upon itself, immobilized in literalisms that are ironically irreducible"; "... sin bears the same relationship to punishment as the souls in hell bear to their fictive bodies"; "a turning back of reference to what Marianne Shapiro calls 'iconicity,'" and so on). The destruction of body has resulted in the destruction of soul, and language, which conventionally, and intelligibly, distinguishes body from soul, is now caught up in a confusion in which reference itself cannot escape circularity, and is ultimately self-consuming. The dendritic body of the suicide is an extreme representation of reification, but such reification is not an exemplification of the violated Augustinian distinction between *uti* and *frui*; it functions at a more fundamental level of perversion, through which the only human faculty susceptible of understanding and achieving what is meant by *uti* is reduced to something absolutely incapable of anything beyond *frui*.

14. Lansing's remarks (op. cit., 77–78) are particularly relevant to this point.

15. In the many paintings of this popular subject that were made in the 16th century—by Altdorfer, Cranach, Brueghel, and many others—, such intimate relations are often depicted graphically by the snake's entwinement around the trunk of the tree, and Adam's and Eve's standing close to it, beneath its boughs, on either side.

16. Teodolinda Barolini (op. cit., 224–225) points out other Christological echoes parodied in *Inferno* 25, and notes the Ovidian derivation of Dante's description of the Phoenix's self-immolation and regeneration.

17. R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951; rpt. 1989), Chapter 2, esp. 123, 129–130, notes that the Romans located the life-spirit, *psyche*, or *anima*, as well as the *genius*, in the head.

18. Mazzotta (op. cit., 104) writes that the phoenix "Like the sun, to which it is related, ... symbolizes the perpetuity, the rhythm of death and renewal of the fallen world of change." He sees the phoenix as one of "two magic fictional referents" (the other being the heliotrope) that are used to describe "the endless movement of forms" (103). But the heliotrope, I would argue, refers to a different kind of movement. Following Derrida (in "La Mythologie Blanche"), Mazzotta calls heliotrope "the metaphor of metaphors," "literally a fictional trope, a figure of the sun that would conceal [the thieves'] visibility, their nakedness. ... ." But heliotrope, in *Inferno* 24, is coupled with the word "pertugio" ("sanza sperar pertugio o elitropia," 93), which, although commonly translated here as "hiding place" (so in Mazzotta, 104), clearly does not have that meaning in any of its other four occurrences in the *Commedia*: *Inf.* 33.22 ("Breve pertugio dentro de la muda"), *Inf.* 34.138 ("che porta 'l ciel, per un pertugio tondo"), *Purg.* 18.111 ("però ne dite ond'è presso il pertugio"), and *Par.* 20.23 ("prende sua forma, e sì, com'al pertugio"). In all these cases it refers to an opening, and in the first three, at least, to an opening that constitutes a sort of interface (between Ugolino's prison and the sunlit world outside; between the dark underworld and the starlit sky above the mountain of Purgatory; between one level of Purgatory and the next; the fourth passage refers to the vent of a reed-pipe that makes possible the conversion of breath into sound). Now the "elitropia" paralleled with "pertugio" is indeed a "metaphor of metaphors," in the sense that it is not the trope that turns one thing into another, but the trope of turning, itself—for it is the name, not only of the precious stone that cures snakebite, but, literally, of the flower that turns towards the sun. Its significance is made explicit in the famous sonnet among the *Rime dubbie* (number VIII in the old Società Dantesca Italiana edition, Florence, 1960, p. 127) that is directed to Giovanni da Quirino: *Né quella ch'a veder lo sol si gira, / e 'l non mutato amor mutata serba*. The issue for the thieves then becomes the irreversibility of metaphor—their being imprisoned, so to say, on one side of it: their punishment, for all its dynamism, is a frozen literalization of the liminal scene in Eden, when the first two people, naked, were cozened by the serpent into theft of the forbidden fruit, and the despair of finding a pass-through ("pertugio") is like the despair of achieving a turning back to the true Sun that is God (and not a symbol of unending cyclicity). Vanni Fucci's blasphemous gesture at the end of the canto is an extreme expression of such desperation. (Eugenio Montale, whose early poem *Portami il girasole* connects the sunflower with invisibility—"svanire è dunque la ventura delle venture"—used the lines

quoted above as both epigraph and in the text of another poem composed twenty years later, *La Primavera Hitleriana*.) The heliotrope thus can be seen as a fictional representation of what is meant by the Hebrew word "teshuvah" (i.e., conversion), making it a metaphor for the central action of the poem (cf. Freccero, "The Prologue Scene," 1–28).

19. The idea of figuralism in late antiquity and the middle ages is extensively discussed by Erich Auerbach in his seminal essay "Figura," published in English translation in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959).

20. *The Fall of Lucifer*, an English mystery play common to all four of the major cycles, represents Lucifer's original act of rebellion as his seating himself on the divine throne (in a brief interval when God has vacated it, saying, "For I will wend and take my trace, / And se this blisse in every towre") and so, setting himself in the place of his Lord. This diabolical "play-acting" (See the essay "'You have begun a parlous play': The Nature and Limits of Dramatic Mimesis in Four Middle English 'Fall of Lucifer' Cycle Plays," by Robert W. Hanning, in *Comparative Drama* 7 (1973), 22–50; reprinted in *The Drama of the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays*, ed. Clifford Davidson et al., New York: AMS Press, 1982, 140–168) is reenacted in Pier della Vigna's effectively substituting himself for Frederick by controlling the "keys to his heart" so successfully "che dal secreto suo quasi ogn'uom tolsi" (*Inf.* 13.61). See *English Mystery Plays, a Selection*, ed. Peter Happé (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 49–61, especially 53.

21. *La Divina Commedia*, ed. Natalino Sapegno, Milano-Napoli, n. d., 154–155n.

22. See Charles S. Singleton, *Dante Studies 2: Journey to Beatrice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), Chapter 13 ("Natural Justice"), pp. 222–253. In terms of the Aquinian and Aristotelian idea of the soul's justice outlined by Singleton, Pier della Vigna's position is paradoxical and self-contradictory. The soul acting in justice is incapable of making an unjust judgment against itself (or any other), nor is the soul of any fallen human a soul in justice. But a soul not justified is not necessarily an unjust soul. Pier's claims are too large, both in respect of the global consequences of his offence and its condemnation, and in respect of his soul's capacity to render a judgment against itself.

23. As Christopher Kleinhenz has pointed out ("Dante and the Art of Citation," in *Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies*, ed. Theodore J. Cachey, Jr., (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 50–51, the psalm *Labia mea*, sung by the shades of the Gluttonous, announces their conversion from an improper to an appropriate use of their mouths. Dante's allusion here to "la cangiata labbia" announces the principal topic of his coming exchange with Forese.

24. However, Piero Cudini, in "La tenzone fra Dante e Forese e la *Commedia*," *GLI* 159 (1982), 18–25, points out the importance of Forese's face ("faccia") as a critically important feature linking the tenzone with *Purg.* 23. More generally, Cudini discusses their lexical and prosodic connections.

25. Most blatantly, perhaps, by Mark Musa, in the notes to his translation of *Inferno*.

26. The author is indebted to Chapter 5 of Giuseppe Mazzotta's book *Dante, Poet of the Desert* (192–226), which canvasses many of the points noted in the following discussion, and records (though for different reasons) the relation of *Inferno* 13 to *Purgatorio* 21–26.

27. This point has been eloquently spelled out by Eugenio Chiarini in *Enciclopedia dantesca* V:562–563, s. v. *Tenzone*: "Occorre sottolineare l'importanza della T[enzone], oltre che in sé e nell'ambito delle *Rime* . . . come spunto germinale di soluzioni stilistiche e poetiche maturate in simbiosi con il corpo stesso della *Commedia*; . . . una 'memoria' della remota T[enzone] trascorre, da cantica in cantica, in una serie di echi o sviluppi che danno misura di un impegno redentivo e trasfigurativo, etico insieme e fantastico, d'inusitata potenza."

28. Ronald Martinez's stimulating essay, "The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta and the Poetics of the Spirit" (*Stanford Italian Review* 3:1, 37–63), offers a searching review of the ontological implications of Dante's and Bonagiunta's exchange. Martinez reads the famous tercet beginning "I' mi son un, che quando," first and foremost as a declaration of the Pilgrim's resemblance to his trinitarian Creator (e. g., 45), "an act of self-knowledge produced as an audible image, a spoken *verbum* that the poet of Lucca can both see ('issa vegg'io') and hear ('ch'io odo')," 51. He sees the poetic implications of the passage as deriving from this self-identification and from Bonagiunta's understanding of it, and

as co-involving the two poets and their understanding of poetics, rather than as sharply differentiating Dante's poetic from those of Bonagiunta and all the other Tuscan poets. His argument is subtly sustained by his demonstration of the verbal play on "novo," "noto," and "nodo" (60). However, in respect of the assessment of Dante's poetics in relation to those of Bonagiunta (and of Giacomo da Lentino and Guittone d'Arezzo), the argument of the present essay inclines rather to sustain the more or less consensual opinions of earlier scholars— as best represented, perhaps, by Mazzotta (op. cit., 197): "In [the exchange with Bonagiunta] Dante obliquely claims a radical poetic novelty and dissociates himself from the literary tradition of Bonagiunta, Guittone and Iacopo da Lentini"—that the text differentiates Dante's poetic from Bonagiunta's, rather than aligning them.

29. Noted by Warren Ginsberg in *Dante's Aesthetics of Being* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 13. Maria Simonelli's gloss on this line in "Bonagiunta Orbicciani e la problematica dello stil nuovo (*Purg.* XXIV)," *Dante Studies* 86 (1968), 65–82, makes a related point, but sees modification of poetic language as the primary issue: "di volere cioè portare il linguaggio poetico a livello di scolastica universitaria" (71).

30. Simonelli observes that "La famosa terza . . . è di assoluta facilità grammaticale" (75) and quotes S. Pellegrino's reading in "Quando amor mi spira (*Purg.* XXIV, 52–63)," *Studi mediolatini e volgari* 6–7 (1959), 157–167: "il succo della terza . . . è: io sono di quelli che quando sono innamorati, fedelmente manifestano quanto hanno nell'animo. Nulla più (161)." These *obiter dicta* effectively dismiss the subtleties and complexities canvassed by other critics.

31. Luigi Derla, in "Due Studi Danteschi," *Aevum* 58 (1984), 277–78, calls this tercet "una dichiarazione di 'estetica' che è, nello stesso tempo, una formula con cui il parlante designa se stesso come profeta e *notarius* dello Spirito."

32. Interestingly, something comparable is to be observed in the Hebrew text of Genesis. The reflexive ("hithpa'el") forms of the verb that are in the earlier parts of the narrative (before the consumption of the forbidden fruit) sometimes used to describe the actions of God, come to be used of the first humans only after the commission of that first sin (a difference stressed by the negative form of such a verb in describing Adam's and Eve's lack of shame at their nakedness—"velo' hitboshashu").

33. Love is, of course, identified with all three Persons of the Holy Trinity. See, for example, St. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, Book 8, 20; and St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book 15, Chapter 17, par. 27–29; and, for a formulation closer to Dante's time, Richard of St. Victor, *De Trinitate*, Book 6, Chapter 14 (978C—978D). Richard writes: "Spiritus sanctus ergo tunc homini divinitus datur, quando debitus deitatis amor menti humanae inspiratur" ("Therefore the Holy Spirit is given by God to man at that moment when the due love that is in the divinity is breathed into the human mind"). A few lines above he notes that ". . . in Patre est plenitudo amoris gratuiti, in Spiritu sancto plenitudo amoris debiti, in Filio plenitudo amoris debiti simul et gratuiti" (" . . . in the Father is the plenitude of gracious love, in the Holy Spirit, the plenitude of due love, in the Son the plenitude of love at one and the same time due and gracious"). Quoted from Richard de Saint-Victor, *La Trinité*, ed. and tr. Gaston Salet, S. J., Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1959, p. 412. For the Holy Spirit as mediating love, see Aquinas, *S. T. I*, q. 37, art. 2: "et Pater et Filius dicuntur diligentes Spiritu Sancto, vel Amore procedente, et se et nos" ("both the Father and the Son are said to love both each other and us by the Holy Spirit, or proceeding Love" [op. cit. ; translations are mine]).

34. This question is discussed (from a somewhat different point of view) in Steven Botterill's essay "Dante and the Authority of Poetic Language," in *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Amilcare Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 167–179.

35. Derla, *ibid.*, writes: ". . . è compito, per l'uomo, di ricreare *ex novo* la propria vita e il proprio linguaggio."

# Edith Wharton, Adultery, and the Reception of Francesca da Rimini

KATHLEEN VERDUIN

*[T]here are moments when certain subjects are in the air and present themselves irresistibly to imaginations of the most different order. This is perhaps the case when the situation of the story dealt with is one already familiar in the world, when it has grown to be an integral part of human culture, as is the case of the tragedy of Rimini.*

Edith Wharton, "The Three Francescas" (1902)

In his introduction to *The Letters of Edith Wharton* (1988), R. W. B. Lewis acknowledges the novelist's frequent reference to European literature: "Dante, for example, supplied her not so much with quotations as with ways of focusing herself at key moments: she drew from the *Inferno* to disavow an interest in argumentation ('*Non ragionam*' [sic], *passim*), the *Purgatorio* to point to a disastrous marital situation (Pia Tolomei), and the *Paradiso* to convey the blessed beauty of her postwar Mediterranean surroundings ('*cielo della quietà*')" (19). Like other *literati* of her generation, Wharton (1862–1937) decorated her correspondence with phrases from the *Commedia*—she was particularly fond of "non ragionam," "il gran rifiuto," and "color che sanno" (*Letters* 114, 140, 215, 475, 547, 568; see *Inf.* 3.51, 3.60, 4.13)—and Lewis correctly intuits that her reading of Dante informed her subjectivity. But despite the range of familiarity asserted by Lewis's examples, Wharton's tallied allusions cluster most thickly around a single character: the adulterous Francesca da Rimini of *Inferno* 5. Evident throughout her writings, Wharton's interest in Francesca yields a "story of reading" inevitably personal and moving,

intersecting the author's biography at critical junctures and reflecting not only her recurrent literary themes—forbidden love and the unhappy marriage—but the conflicts of her private life. Wharton's appropriation was dictated as well, however, by a simultaneous foregrounding of Francesca in contemporary North Atlantic culture: "in the air," as Wharton recognized, and increasingly eroticized by artistic expression, the figure had achieved new levels of iconic impact and was replete with implication for social and moral issues of the day. The record of Wharton's engagement thus forms an *exemplum* of Francesca's meanings in this period of intensified prominence, roughly the latter decades of the nineteenth century until the First World War.<sup>1</sup>

### Wharton's reading in context

Though by birth a New Yorker (and enjoying intermittent residence in Europe from early childhood on), Wharton owed much to concurrent promotion of Dante by the New England literary establishment (see my "Dante in America"; also Van Anglen), a transmission at once literary and social. Her father's library, she remembered, had contained a copy of Longfellow's translation ("A Backward Glance" 834), as had that of her family's rector, the Rev. Dr. Edward Abiel Washburn; she and Washburn's daughter Emelyn would amuse themselves by climbing through a window and declaiming Dante from the roof (Lewis, *Edith Wharton* 28).<sup>2</sup> As a clergyman of the Anglican rite, Washburn—whose modest volume of poems bears an epigraphic "Motto from Dante's *Paradiso*"—was probably aware of Dante's endorsement by English theologians (see Pite), but he was also related by marriage to Emerson and had frequented Emerson's home as a Harvard student in the late 1830s, coincidentally the years discussion of Dante infused Transcendental circles (see my "Inward Life of Love" 294–95; also Pearl).<sup>3</sup> In the late 1890s, working on her first novel, *The Valley of Decision* (set in eighteenth-century Italy), Wharton was referred to Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908) as the preëminent Italianist of his day, initiating a mutual regard that lasted until Norton's death (she remained a lifelong correspondent of his daughter Sally). As is well known, Norton operated rather as Bourdieu's "symbolic banker" (77), establishing the *Commedia* as cultural capital and potentially even a model for conduct: in addition to his own translation (1891–92) he edited, vetted, and reviewed a host of Dante publications, took a major role in



establishment of the Dante Society of America, and energetically disseminated Dante's work in public lectures, classes at Harvard, and informal gatherings in his "golden brown study" where, as the literary critic Van Wyck Brooks recalled, "Norton read aloud, like a learned, elegant, and venerable priest [ . . . ]. One felt there was something sacramental even in the sherry and the caraway cakes that a maidservant placed in our hands as we were about to depart" (120). Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), later a distinguished art critic and close friend of Wharton's, read Dante with Norton in 1885 and was similarly reverent: "I could not utter a phrase in Italian, and knew it as one spells out a dead tongue. Nevertheless the *Divine Comedy* made me breathless as it loomed up before me, and I panted to reach it" (*Rumour* 292).

While the handful of references to Dante in *The Valley of Decision* (published 1902; see Vance) are hardly consequential, Wharton's attraction to the *Commedia* was clearly stimulated by her association with Norton. In a letter of 1903 she thanks Alfred Austin, lately installed as the English poet laureate, for his "mention of my work in your address to the Dante Society," and three years later acknowledges Mrs. Austin's gift of Lord [William Warren] Vernon's *Readings on the Purgatorio of Dante* (1897); she vows in the same letter to become "an authority on Dante by the end of the summer" (*Letters* 76, 107). Sally Norton sent her a Longfellow Dante in July 1906, a gift Wharton described as "curious," since she had just been studying Vernon (Wharton Archive, Beinecke YCAL 42.II.29). Her habit of invoking Dante through familiar phrases—the "non ragionam" and "color che sanno" mentioned above—appears most often in her letters to the Nortons and their circle, functioning as passwords, signs of incorporation into a community ("color che sanno") of cultivated initiates. Her early short fiction assumes a similar if superficial acquaintance by her readers: representative is "The Fulness [*sic*] of Life," published in *Scribner's* magazine in October of 1893, which sentimentally groups verses from Dante and Shakespeare with "the perfume of a flower [ . . . ] a picture or a sunset" as source of "exquisite sensations"; "The Muse's Tragedy," serialized in *Scribner's* in 1903, identifies "Pia Tolomei" among a fictional poet's best works (*Collected Stories* 15, 50).

But safely camouflaged by the respectability Anglo-American culture had conferred upon Dante's poem, the reference to Pia de' Tolomei (*Purg.* 5) constitutes a gesture at least incipiently subversive and anticipates later

directions in Wharton's work. "Do you know, I begin to see what marriage is for," a disaffected character protests in "Souls Belated" (1899). "It's to keep people away from each other" (*Collected Stories* 118). Though Norton chided her after the publication of her novel *The House of Mirth* (1905) that "no great work of the imagination has ever been based on illicit passion" (quoted in "A Backward Glance" 880), Wharton—stuck since 1885 in a stultifying and apparently sexless union with Edward "Teddy" Wharton—had by now learned what her fictional talent might secretly be for: the interrogation and potential displacement of conventional marriage, the exploration of culturally interdicted emotions, and an insistence on what her generation was the first to call "human sexuality." Her "art of allusion"—as Helen Killoran argues, an intentional code for "experiences Edith Wharton preferred not to discuss openly" (1)—accordingly all but ignores the insubstantial Beatrice (though see note 6, below); a character in "That Good May Come" (1894) remarks indeed "that Dante, perhaps, if he could have been brought to book, would have to confess to caring a good deal more for the *pietosa donna* of the window than for the mummified memory of a long-dead Beatrice" (*Collected Short Stories* 1.21). Instead, Wharton homed in on what she termed in a letter of 1909 Dante's "women discontented with their husbands" (*Letters* 175): La Pia, first, then more prominently Francesca.<sup>4</sup>

Wharton devoted her only sustained critical attention to Dante in "The Three Francescas," a review of a recent trio of dramatic treatments of *Inferno* 5 by Stephen Phillips (*Paolo and Francesca*, published 1900, produced 1902), Gabriele D'Annunzio (*Francesca da Rimini*, 1901), and the American expatriate Francis Marion Crawford (*Francesca da Rimini*, 1902). On 7 May 1902 Wharton wrote to William Dean Howells, himself a Dante enthusiast, "I should like to write an article on the three Francescas now before the public—Mr. Phillips's, Mr. Crawford's & d'Annunzio's [*sic*—of which the two latter, at least, seem to me worth discussing" (*Letters* 61). She wrote also to Margaret Chanler, Crawford's half-sister and a friend since childhood,

By the way, Mr. Crawford sent me about ten days ago the French version<sup>5</sup> of Francesca, & I am so emballée about it that I am writing for the North American an article on the three Francescas. It seems to me a very strong & simple play, & quite different in quality from anything he has ever written. I wonder if you agree with me? I wonder also if you have read d'Annunzio's Francesca. I am not an admirer of the great man's, but, in his case too, the theme seems to have

inspired him, & though the play is absurd as a play, it is full of beauty as a romantic poem, & as mediaeval as a gothic tapestry. (*Letters* 63)

In previously unpublished letters cited in Frederick Wegener's edition of Wharton's critical writings, Wharton commented further on her subjects: "Certainly, I prefer Mr. Phillips plaintive to Mr. Phillips heroic [she had recently reviewed Phillips's *Ulysses*][. . .]. But d'Annunzio can give him points this time! I hate to admit it, for I hate d'Annunzio, but his *Francesca* is very fine." She also demonstrates awareness of earlier dramas, Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini* (1815) and the American George Henry Boker's *Francesca da Rimini* (1855), both of which she assumes "well known to the general reader" (quoted in *Uncollected Critical Writings* 93). To Sally Norton she wrote (10 May 1902), "As a piece of archeology, a kind of museum 'reconstitution' I think D'Annunzio's *Francesca* might interest Mr. Norton. Paolo Malatesta meets Dante in Florence!" (Wharton Archive, Beinecke YCAL 42.II.29).

Published in the July 1902 issue of the *North American Review*, Wharton's essay presents the dramatists' strategies for filling out Dante's bare outline (all three had recourse to Boccaccio's account), but it also shows her alert to prevailing cultural concerns, particularly with regard to what she calls "historical truth and racial psychology" (92). "It is safe to say," she notes, "that Giovanni Malatesta (quaintly described in the *Ottimo Commento* as 'an open-hearted man, warlike and cruel') would not have behaved like a gentlemanly Englishman with a tendency to introspection and melancholia" (83; on Wharton's racial views, see Ammons). She lauds D'Annunzio's recreation of the Middle Ages and commends Crawford for going "to the old chronicles" and respecting presumably cultural patterns, "the long attachment of the lovers" (Crawford's drama climaxes Paolo and Francesca's fourteen-year affair) and Malatesta's Mediterranean volatility, "from a violent and outspoken man to a stealthy smiling assassin" (89). These emphases permit Wharton rather conspicuously to sidestep the moral issues posed by Francesca's story, but something close to emotional engagement is permitted to surface in a single line: "Dante gave but the central fact of the great love against which the gates of hell could not prevail" (81). By an arguably blasphemous allusion to Christ's words to St. Peter—"upon this rock I shall build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18, Authorized Version)—the

statement invokes and tacitly endorses Francesca's contemporary installation as, in the title for an 1895 *Cosmopolitan* article by the romantic novelist "Ouida" (Marie-Louise de la Ramée), a "Great Passion of History."

### The Fullerton affair

If Wharton the aspiring critic kept to relatively impersonal questions of plot structure and cultural accuracy, Wharton in private would soon capitulate to popular constructions of Francesca as prototype of erotic surrender. In 1907 she met William Morton Fullerton (1865–1952), a New England expatriate serving as Paris correspondent for the *London Times* and a former student of Norton's at Harvard; back in Paris the following year, she invited Fullerton (whom she described to Sally Norton as "very intelligent, but slightly mysterious, I think" [*Letters* 113]) to escort her to a performance of D'Annunzio's *La Figlia di Iorio*: "I am going to as many performances as possible, & as my husband objects to the language, I am obliged to throw myself on the charity of my friends" (*Letters* 127–28). In the view of Wharton's biographer Shari Benstock, "the powerful sexuality of the drama stirred Edith's emotions. When in the play, Iorio's daughter is unable to send her lover away once he has kissed her, Fullerton leaned over to her and said laughingly, 'That's something you don't know anything about'" (179; for the source, see Gribben 31). The two commenced an affair that probably lasted from the early months of 1908 to 1910 or 1911. Wharton's personal diary for 1908, among the Wharton papers at the Lilly Library, repeatedly engages Dante, beginning with the verse inscribed for 1 January: "Sono stato all'Inferno / e son tornato."<sup>6</sup> Wharton's notes indicate that she was reading the *Purgatorio* in February, and on the 17th she recorded her attendance at "Romanelli's Dante reading." From this point on, Wharton's references to Fullerton habitually occur in German as a rudimentary private code, eventually complicated by similarly encoded references to Dante: on 4 March, "Er kam. Qui comincia La Vita Nuova," and after an afternoon in Fullerton's company, "Conosco i segni dell'antica fiamma" (*Purg.* 30.48). As her various biographers notice (e.g., Dwight 146; Lewis, *Edith Wharton* 205), phrases from Francesca's monologue are especially striking: on 17 February, "Quel giorno più"; on 27 March, "Galeotto fu il libro"; on 7 April, "non vi leggemmo avanti" (*Inf.* 5.137–38). In her surviving

letters to Fullerton—most of which came to light only in 1980 when a Paris owner sold them to the Ransom Center at the University of Texas—Wharton quoted from *Par.* 33.103–105 to describe a visit to Beauvais Cathedral on 3 May 1908—“I was thinking all the while of a white wheeling rose” (*Letters* 143)—and on 5 June of the same year noted that Fullerton had “asked me so often to tell you again ‘il quanto e il quale’” (*Par.* 23.92; Gribben 24). In “L’âme close” (referred to by Wharton scholars as “The Life Apart” or “the Love Diary”), her personal journal of their relationship, Wharton’s apparently overwhelming sense of long-delayed erotic gratification (in 1908 she was forty-six; for further discussion, see Erlich) again invokes the presumably approving shade of Dante:

The day before yesterday, when I made you some answer that surprised & amused you, & you exclaimed, “Oh, the joy of seeing around things together,” I felt for the first time that you understood what I mean by the thoughts that are closer than a kiss.—And yet I understand now, for the first time, how thought may be dissolved into feeling, & what Dante meant when he [. . .] said “Donne che avete l’intelletto d’amore.” (quoted in Price and McBride 674)

Dante was also near at hand when she described her homecoming: handing an “interesting passage” to Teddy, she was rebuffed by his “Does that sort of thing really amuse you?” and lamented, “I heard the key turn in my prison-lock” (*Inf.* 33.46; quoted in Price and McBride 674).

These references served Wharton to cement her bond with Fullerton and certify his superiority to the man she had married. But where Wharton’s husband was simply obtuse (and would later sink into outright mental illness; the couple divorced in 1913), her paramour proved pathologically devious, a career lover whose ultimately baffling gifts included the ability, in the words of Cynthia Griffin Wolff, “to join the literary and the sexual” (195). As product of a shared cultural matrix, Fullerton could appropriately approve and savor Wharton’s allusive letters and the poems she composed to memorialize their meetings; as an opportunist who boasted on his deathbed that he had “had” Edith Wharton (Mainwaring 2), he was not above bargaining over their price. Marion Mainwaring’s fascinating biography (2001) documents Fullerton’s adroit and practiced manipulation of numerous women and of male lovers as well; while the record confirms Wharton’s vulnerability, she anticipated almost from the first, as she confessed to Fullerton, “the woman who will replace me in your heart” (31 March 1908; Gribben 23). By the summer

of 1910 Fullerton had fallen back on his usual *modus operandi* of long silences and unexplained retreats; the high drama implied by Wharton's literary allusions settled into banality. Over the quarter-century left to her, Wharton maintained a polite association with Fullerton, but their romance was over. A shade of regret, a poignant remembrance as it were *del tempo felice*, occurs only once, in 1921, in a note acknowledging Fullerton's return of a book: "Cher ami—yes, 'Fumée' had quite vanished. Thanks for restoring it: such a tribute is worth salvaging—though I was *not* the lady you read the book with 'years ago.'" Wharton ends the letter with an appreciative reference to her home in France that incidentally permits a mild note of reproach: "Ste Claire is no mere parterre of heaven: it is the 'cielo della quieta' that Dante (whom we did read together) found above the Seventh Heaven" (*Par.* 30.53; *Letters* 442).

### Francesca in culture

For the genteel Norton, as his biographer James Turner suggests, the *Commedia* "became perforce a metaphorical spirituality deeply human and intensely appealing to a man drifting away from his Unitarian moorings" (199); beyond the walls of his golden brown study, however, the New Englanders Norton had taught to sacralize Dante were willfully reading by other lights. In the 1880s Francis Marion Crawford, socially well connected and a nephew of Julia Ward Howe, carried on a potentially dangerous flirtation with the Boston socialite Isabella Stewart ("Mrs. Jack") Gardner, whose acquisition of *objets-d'art* and rare copies of Dante was regularly advised by Norton in exchange for her fiscal support of the Dante Society (Carter 97; Hadley xix): the interval's material remnant is Crawford's and Gardner's interleaved copies of the *Commedia*, bound *con amore* by Tiffany after Crawford's own design (see Shand-Tucci 42–60). In his biography of Gardner, Douglass Shand-Tucci cites also the romance of Maria Timmins and John Jay Chapman (another student of Norton's and eventually a friend of Wharton's, Chapman would publish his own book on Dante in 1927), who reportedly fell in love by climbing "to the top floor of the [Boston] Athenaeum to read Dante side by side" (50). While it is perhaps best to suppress the mental picture of Wharton and Fullerton similarly reading, then "reading no more," in some parodic gesture of mimetic desire, it is clear that Dante's potentially forbidding

moral import was easily slurred over by an uncritically romantic appropriation already commonplace in Europe.

As is well known, Francesca dominated the modern Dante revival from its outset in the late eighteenth century; in the English-speaking world, as elsewhere, *Inferno* 5 was from the first a favorite for translation. As Teodolinda Barolini observes in an essay that brilliantly rehistoricizes the character, we have now “heard or encountered so many tellings of Francesca’s tale—our cultural imaginary has been for so long overstocked with commentaries, paintings, dramas, tragedies, poems, and musical responses to Francesca—that we only with difficulty clear the cultural underbrush” (6). But this cultural underbrush is of course by no means homogeneous, and as several scholars document, Francesca sustained serial reinterpretation in line with contemporary literary postures and social debates. Diego Scaglia argues, for instance, that Byron, Keats, and Leigh Hunt read Francesca’s story “like a tale of resistance, almost the plot of a failed revolution so often encountered in poems by the younger Romantics” (107); this defiance gave way, as Francesca Bugliani-Knox notes in a helpful survey of Francesca’s nineteenth-century circulation, as Victorian critics, Rossetti’s manifest eroticism notwithstanding, labored to salvage Francesca’s purity. Even as a condemned sinner—an admonition, in the words of the distinguished Dante scholar and translator P. H. Wicksteed, in his *Six Sermons on Dante* (1879), that “no passion, however wild in its intensity [. . .] may dare to raise itself above the laws of God and man” (80–81)—Francesca was simultaneously absorbed, as Alison Milbank has shown, into a popular Victorian continuum of feminine vulnerability whose extreme was the woman of the street: “the masculine chivalry of the nineteenth century [. . .] caused men of the stature of Gladstone and Gissing to go on quests to rescue fallen women, now the modern ‘damsels in distress’—in proof of her paradigmatic status, Francesca was even carved on Gladstone’s tombstone” (151). Indeed, the ambiguity of Francesca’s “non vi leggemmo avante” encouraged hope that the lovers’ reading was interrupted not by adulterous (even, technically, incestuous) intercourse, but by their murder. Both Bugliani-Knox (225) and Milbank cite H. C. Barlow’s “Francesca da Rimini, Her Lamentation and Vindication” (1859), an essay asserting that, in Milbank’s summary, “she did not commit adultery at all, and was traduced. [. . .] Her abode is hell because she died unabsolved” (151). Though, as Norton averred, Barlow’s position

was “long known, but never accepted” (625), it exemplifies the gentlemanly Victorian impulse to remove Francesca from blame. Several visual artists of the nineteenth century, among them Doré and the Italian Clemente Alberti (1828), replicated John Flaxman’s 1793 engraving (Figure 1) depicting Malatesta poised to strike as Paolo kisses a demurely reluctant Francesca: the episode is tacitly bowdlerized, the kiss as rapturous emotional consummation in itself. By the end of the century, the moral security of this interpretation was neither convincing nor in vogue: and in what might be bracketed as a third phase of her reception, Francesca followed cultural trends by manifestly heating up. As Milbank concludes (though with regrettable brevity), in the *fin de siècle* “Francesca loses her innocence but is all the more fêted because of this. She swallows up the poem of Dante completely and as the ‘sweet saint of sin’ is celebrated by Richard Le Gallienne and a whole generation of Swinburnians” (151–52).<sup>7</sup>

### The novel of adultery

By the time of her affair in 1908, Wharton had in other words inherited a Francesca turned frankly, if tragically, sexual (Bugliani-Knox too stresses the figure’s adherence to “themes of love and death beloved by Wilde and the other *fin de siècle* authors” [225]), and it remains to search out events that might have brought about this cultural portage. Prominent among these was surely the literary theorizing of marriage and adultery reflected in Wharton’s own fiction. Even a superficial acquaintance discloses the thematic prevalence of “fallen women” and marital infidelity in European novels of the second half of the nineteenth century: indeed, the era of Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1857), Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (1878), and Theodor Fontane’s *Effi Briest* (1895) has been called the High Age of Adultery (see White and Segal; Overton). Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* appeared in America in 1899, and in the year of Wharton’s affair with Fullerton the Norwegian Sigrid Undset opened her first novel, *Fru Marta Oulie*, with the arresting words “I have been unfaithful to my husband.” Popular from its first appearance as a novel (1848), then play (1852), then in successive operatic reincarnations, was *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas *father*, a durable tearjerker about a self-sacrificial prostitute. While English critics boasted the salutary absence of adultery



from their letters, the topic was nevertheless pervasive, as Barbara Leckie has recently demonstrated, in English journalism, legal history, sensational fiction, and censorship controversies. In his foundational study *Adultery in the Novel* (1979), Tony Tanner contends that bourgeois elevation of marriage cloaked an uneasy awareness of the institution's fragility; subsequent scholarly literature on the "novel of adultery" further historicizes the genre by reference to contemporary divorce laws and patriarchal sequestration of women in the presumed security of domesticity. Michelle Perrot, in the fourth volume of Duby and Ariés's *History of Private Life*, also documents an eruptive adultery obsession in late nineteenth-century France:

Adultery was a frequent topic of afternoon conversation. In high political circles, Jean Estèbe tells us, "it was normal to have a mistress." "An affair with a lady of high society might even attract appreciative notice." Novels and plays [Perrot previously cited Zola, Mirbeau, and Maupassant] encouraged infidelity. Alexandre Dumas *fit*, Feydeau, Becque, and Bataille harped endlessly on the theme of adulterous love in plays in which the *ménage à trois* functioned with the efficiency of a bourgeois marriage. An illicit affair calmed the nerves and piqued the senses, with secrecy as an added spice. [. . .] But adulterous farce did more than hint at the pleasures of extramarital love. The theater also alleviated vague anxieties about the blurring of distinctions between licit and illicit. The man who took his wife to laugh at a Feydeau comedy simultaneously quelled any fear that his comfortable vice might somehow undermine his family. (607–608)

Perrot also notes the emergence in France of the *maison de rendez-vous*, a resort for those "willing to pay for the illusion of fashionable adultery" (612). But however fashionable for men—Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* charged that "[b]ourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common" (quoted in Labanyi 98)—adultery continued to damn women; D. A. Williams writes that "Since marriage, under the patriarchal system, was the one and only place in which the sexual desire of the woman could be legitimately expressed, adultery of the wife threatened to undermine the very basis upon which the authority of the husband rested" (3)—a form of self-assertion presaging the putative "sexual anarchy" (see Showalter) nascent in the emerging suffrage movement. The novel of adultery, its heroines usually dead by the final chapter, might thus be construed as a highly charged cautionary tale; as Felicia Gordon writes, "At the very moment when women's emancipation threatened to become a historical reality and when divorce and dissolution of marriage

became a practical possibility, such novels acted as powerful agents of denial” (94). Yet the genre simultaneously confirms the century’s obsession with erotic passion as, in the words of social historian Peter Gay, “supreme, unutterable bliss”; as Gay proposes, “the very idea of romantic love, and the much advertised private lives of many artists of the nineteenth century, were so many reproaches to that monument of insincerity, that bland and deceptive façade, bourgeois marriage” (*Education of the Senses* 369, 36).

As a highly visible exemplar of female adultery, Francesca could hardly fail to fall in line with erring heroines of nineteenth-century fiction: even her decorous “non vi leggemmo avante” prefigured the politely reticent row of dots now frequently appearing on the printed page (see Gay, *Tender Passion* 194). Indeed, the triad of adulterous wife, lover, and lurking husband in the 1909 painting (simply titled “Adultery”) that accompanies Perrot’s essay exactly resembles configurations of Francesca, Paolo, and Giovanni Malatesta in the visual arts. As faithless wife, Francesca mirrored the period’s social anxieties; in her affirmation of passion, she reflected its desires.

### Francesca on stage

Similar tensions may underlie Francesca’s obsessive representation in the performing arts. The *Dante Encyclopedia* (905–912) lists more than sixty musical compositions inspired by *Inferno* 5 between 1820 and 1920, a few still in repertoire. Liszt’s *Dante Symphony* (1856) reflects the composer’s Catholic faith, his devotion to the poem that, as he reportedly confessed as he lay dying, had “accompanied me on all my travels” (*Letters* 945). But Tchaikovsky’s *Francesca da Rimini Suite* (composed 1876), soon an international favorite (the London premiere in 1893, conducted by the composer, was followed by a “gala reception” [Puznansky 241]), suggests a transgressive fascination corroborated by personal documents. Tchaikovsky more than once prefaced letters with Francesca’s lines “Nessun maggior dolore / che ricordarsi del tempo felice / nella miseria,” a gesture, like Wharton’s penchant for “non ragionam,” probably little more than decorative; but biographers assert a conflicted association between the musical composition and the composer’s own “crisis years,” his struggle with what he called his “pernicious passions” and intense attraction to

Sergei Kireev (see Brown 116; Puznansky 7). Tchaikovsky, who like Liszt knew Dante from the French translation of the Abbé Lammenais and was familiar with Doré's engravings, had previously abandoned plans for a full-scale opera based on a libretto brought to his attention by his devoted brother Modest; undiscouraged, Modest later offered his own libretto to Rachmaninoff, precipitating Rachmaninoff's opera *Francesca da Rimini* in 1906 (see Martyn 161–69).

Francesca's modulation toward antinomian eroticism—Rachmaninoff's principals expire melodiously to the line "Where you are is everlasting bliss"—is equally evident on the dramatic stage (for further description, see Iannucci, "Dramatic Arts"). Pellico, whose *Francesca da Rimini* (1815) remained popular through the century of its composition, asserts Francesca's unimpeachable innocence: a virtuous daughter reft from "thoughts of cloistered maidenhood" (258), she reproaches as "impious" Paolo's charge that her father betrayed her into marriage and is accidentally killed by courageously throwing herself between the quarreling brothers. But a generation later Boker's *Francesca da Rimini*, which opened in New York and Philadelphia in 1855 and was successfully revived by actor-director Lawrence Barrett in the early 1880s (see Flory, Voelker, and, most recently, Iannucci, "Americanization"), apparently drew on less presentable personal conflicts. Boker was considered in his day a libertine (Evans 4) and left among his literary remains a series of over three hundred sonnets, *A Sequence on Profane Love*, inspired by a liaison of fifteen years. Casting Dante (invoked as "the grim Florentine" in Boker's Sonnet LXVI) as cold and judgmental, Boker has Francesca welcome Paolo's kiss with "The women of our clime / Do never give away but half a heart" (451). Character thus condemns author from a standpoint of presumably more humane (or at least warmly Mediterranean) morality, as the inspired lovers of Boker's sonnets self-righteously persist "though hell yawned in view" (LXXXVII). Otis Skinner, who played Paolo to Barrett's Lanciotto (like "Gianciotto" a form of Malatesta's name), recalled in his memoirs how a week before the play opened Barrett decided that the love scene—originally, in Skinner's words, "a frenzied declaration of love between the guilty pair, and the resolve that nothing should stand in the way of its consummation"—was "immodest and suggestive" and had to be changed (131). Skinner complied, but restored Boker's lines in his own production of 1902, mounted in the wake

of Phillips and D'Annunzio. Stephen Phillips's *Paolo and Francesca: A Tragedy in Four Acts* (see Frost, Calin), whose commission for presentation at London's Haymarket Theatre (Le Gallienne, *Romantic '90s* 213–14) signals the story's appropriation by the *fin de siècle* and underscores its achieved status as a presumably foolproof hit, starkly opposes conventional morality with the absolute of passion: reading of Guinevere and Lancelot, Francesca murmurs, "But these two were so glad in their wrong love: / It was their joy, it was their helpless joy," and Paolo entreats her permission "with kisses [to] burn this body away, / That our two souls may dart together free" (86, 110). Even Gianciotto pronounces at curtain, "A second wedding here begins [. . .]. And I would have all reverent and seemly: / For they were nobly born and deep in love" (118–19). By the turn of the nineteenth century Francesca was theatrically familiar as Juliet, and her sexuality had been moved center stage.

### Stardom

While exploiting what was by their time obviously a stock, even shopworn, theatrical construct, the plays of D'Annunzio and Crawford attained a new dimension of public interest by wedding Francesca to the phenomenon recognizable to us as stardom (a gesture, as Barolini proposes, that Dante was arguably the first to make). D'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini* was first performed at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome in 1901 (he originally projected a trilogy, *I Malatesti*).<sup>8</sup> Originally lasting six hours, and costing 400,000 *lire*, the play was staged as a grandiose historical pageant, complete with medieval battle scene; Pirandello found it unbearable, and D'Annunzio's secretary Tommaso Antongini remembered how "thick, acrid smoke, scientifically obtained by the chemist Heilbig, blinded and left breathless some hapless spectators, who abandoned the theatre, howling and booing" (437; see also Stokes, Booth, and Basnett 119–27; Weaver 193–24; Sheehy 200–211). But the casting of Eleanora Duse as Francesca (Figure 2), informed by widespread knowledge of her private condition (blatantly advertised in his 1900 novel *La Fiamma*) as D'Annunzio's mistress and perceived through the intertext of her previous role as the fallen "dame aux camélias" of Dumas, defined the event and complemented the persona of D'Annunzio, "whose life and works were the fullest and most flamboyant embodiment in Italy of the strange and exotic

final flowering of romanticism which in the north of Europe gave rise to the Symbolists and the decadents” (Carlson 192); the play was translated by the English aesthete Arthur Symons. John Stokes describes the “cult of Duse” as a “Decadent affectation,” quoting the indictment of Duse from the *Fortnightly Review* in 1900 as “the modern actress, the *fin-de-siècle* woman *par excellence* with her hysterical maladies, her neuroticism, her anaemia and all its consequences” (154, 162).

As brought to life by “la Duse,” Francesca radiated the ambiguous allure of the *fin de siècle*, the *frisson* of passion tragically fatal in its outcome and, as in Wilde’s biblical drama *Salomé* (1893), rendered cosmic within a larger Christian narrative of sin and damnation. Richard Le Gallienne’s long poem “Paolo and Francesca” (1892), cited by Milbank and Bugliani-Knox as the *locus classicus* of Francesca’s decadent phase as the “sweet saint of sin,” likewise appreciates Francesca’s poignant fate the more for its placement “[o]n the dark background of [Dante’s] theme sublime” (14). Soulful of expression, spurning stage makeup and able to blush at will, Duse melded guilt with sympathetic vulnerability: an authentically “fallen woman,” she was easily forgiven by a generation brought up on Dumas. Wharton, it will be recalled, noted that she was “not an admirer” of D’Annunzio, probably on account of his reported abuse of Duse, and in Boston Isabella Stewart Gardner followed the progress of the far-off *amour* with close attention: “So poor deluded Duse has succumbed to that beast D’Annunzio,” she wrote Berenson in 1899, and a few months later, “Have the Duse and D’Annunzio broken? Poor Duse! I wish someone would kick D’Annunzio for me!” (Hadley 168, 174). During her second American tour in 1902–1903 (see Sheehy 205–211) Duse brought D’Annunzio’s Francesca to the United States and was remembered by an enraptured Skinner:

I saw the D’Annunzio FRANCESCA one bitterly cold night in Chicago when we were a mere handful of spectators to see the greatest of all actresses—Eleonora [*sic*] Duse. She was a white flame as she entered the garden and stood by the flower-filled sarcophagus. She was Art visualized, personified, and yet intangible. She did not know whether we were a handful or a multitude sitting entranced before her. (263)

The poet Amy Lowell, who attended Duse’s performance in Boston, dated her artistic career to meeting the actress (Gould 148), and Sara Teasdale’s *Sonnets to Duse and Other Poems* (1907) includes her adoring “To a Picture of Eleanora Duse as ‘Francesca da Rimini’”:

Oh flower-sweet face and bended flower-like head!  
Oh violet whose purple cannot pale,  
Or forest fragrance [ . . . ]  
If ever I have pictured in a dream  
My guardian angel, she is like to this,  
Her eyes know only joy, yet sorrow lingers there,  
And on her lips the shadow of a kiss. (ll. 1–3, 11–14)

Francesca slid significantly from grace, however, by incarnation in Duse's closest professional rival Sarah Bernhardt (Figure 3), whose sexuality was notoriously uninhibited. Written expressly at Bernhardt's request, Crawford's *Francesca da Rimini* (1902) seemed primed for success; it opened at her own Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt in Paris (established in 1899 on the crest's of the actress's fame). Crawford to some extent perpetuates the *fin de siècle* patterns, allowing Paolo and Francesca to scorn divine judgment: "Without the other, heaven would be a hell for each—to be together always would make the blackest hell a heaven" (52). But (and this may have appealed to Wharton's developing realism) Crawford also archly desentimentalizes and even cheapens their passion, presenting the lovers in a relationship of such duration as to seem routine, converting Paolo into a *cicisbeo*, introducing Francesca's adolescent daughter Concordia, dangling the possibility of Concordia's illegitimacy, and marking the acts with portentous appearances by Paolo's estranged wife, Orabile Beatrice, whose demise Paolo callously encourages. Along with a self-advertised historical accuracy (Crawford insisted [xix] he had found remnants of the trapdoor by which, according to Boccaccio, Paolo attempted escape), Crawford's version thus represents a self-consciously ironized modernization, a deliberate attempt to bring Francesca's story into the twentieth century: he continued to think well of the play and displayed an autographed poster in his Fifth Avenue apartment (Elliott 276). But his refusal to honor audience expectations, by the turn of the century deeply entrenched, exacted a price of dramatic failure: the play abruptly closed after two dozen performances. Since the 1890s, a biographer notes, Bernhardt (a veteran, like Duse, of the *dame aux camélias* role) had experimented with "heroines in whom sensuality was leavened by little or no chastity. In varying degrees [ . . . ] audiences rejected these characters: the last (*Francesca da Rimini*) with incredible harshness" (Salmon 79). As Michelle Booth writes, "Bernhardt had been brought up in a theatrical

tradition where plays tended to conclude either in sacrifice or in reconciliation, where the penalty for female separateness was death. Its master was Dumas *fi*s, the agonist of adultery” (Stokes, Booth, and Basnett 46).

### *Vedi Tristano!*

In the first act of D’Annunzio’s *Francesca*, a chorus of women urge the Jester (a character frequently added to dramatic versions) to “tell us a story of knights. Yes, yes, knights of the round table. Do you know their stories? The love of Iseult of the golden hair? Francesca loves them” (23). Act III opens in a room painted with a fresco of the Tristan story, and as she reads the romance of Lancelot Francesca murmurs, “It is as if you brought me a drugged wine” (134). With the play’s adoption by composer Riccardo Zandonai for his opera *Francesca da Rimini* in 1914, the libretto incorporating nearly eighty percent of D’Annunzio’s text, Paolo and Francesca paired officially with Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* (1865) on the operatic stage (see Hoffman), and the cult of Wagner represents another component in Francesca’s late nineteenth-century construction. Wagner himself, although his influence on the pieces by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff is well known, did not compose his own Francesca opera: though his correspondence reveals recurrent engagement with Dante, he was put off by the poet he called, in a long letter to Liszt (7 June 1855), “a childish Jesuit” (*Letters* 347) and found Goethe’s *Faust* more congenial. Liszt’s daughter Cosima, who left her husband for Wagner in 1870, recorded in her diary for 26 December 1877 that Richard had that night read her two cantos from the *Commedia*. “How wonderful, how impressive—said R.—indeed is Francesca’s story, and how great is the poet who can make us accept so terrible a view of life, indeed, make us feel joy and delight in spite of all the horrors” (1.1009). But the final scene of *Tristan und Isolde*—the lovers lying slain, the dishonored husband King Mark (the double murder is performed by Kurvenal) presiding and granted the summary comment—aligns almost identically with the Francesca dramas discussed above; and the *topos* of *surrender passionis* evoked in Wagner’s opera is little different from the intoxicated submission of Paolo and Francesca, culminating similarly in a *Liebestod*. Max Nordau, in his classic jeremiad against decadence, *Degeneration* (*Entartung*, 1905), ranted against “the amorous whinings, whimperings and ravings of *Tristan und Isolde*”

as “mad delirium” (180). But the composer’s own commentary on his opera—in the estimation of Peter Gay “a long drawn out and reiterated representation of sexual congress” (*Tender Passion* 265)—is rhetorically as excessive: “So in one long breath let that unslaked longing swell from the first avowal of the gentle tremor of attraction, through half-heaved sighs, through hopes and fears, laments and wishes, joy and torment, to the mightiest onset, most resolute attempt to find the breach unbarring to the heart a path into the sea of endless love’s delight” (*Wagner on Music and Drama* 273).

Wagnerian eroticism (Wharton wrote Fullerton in 1911 that after reading Wagner’s autobiography “[e]verything will seem insipid—even Nietzsche” [Gribben 56]) and the theatrical proliferation of Francescas congealed in the person of D’Annunzio. D’Annunzio’s infatuation with Wagner pulsates in *La Fiamma* and is flagrantly displayed in his later novel *Il Trionfo della Morte* (1894), linked indeed with his lovers’ earlier tryst at Rimini:

But it was in the prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* that love’s breathless longings for death rang out with unexampled vehemence, that insatiable desire rose to the frenzy of destruction. “To drain to thine honour the cup of eternal love, willingly would I consecrate thee to death with me, upon the self-same altar!”

It was not from the frail instrument, incapable of reproducing even an echo of the torrent-like plenitude of the music, but from the eloquent interpretation of her enthusiastic companion that Ippolita gathered all the grandeur of that tragical revelation. And just as one day her lover’s words had called up before her that deserted Guelph city of convents and monasteries, so now she saw in fancy the solitary gray old town of Bayreuth, set among the Bavarian mountains in a mystic landscape. [. . .] With a devouring fury, like a fire blazing up out of some nameless abyss, desire spread wide and quivered and flamed higher and higher [. . .]. All things fell a prey to the intoxication of that melodious flame; all that the world contains of great and sublime vibrated in that rapture, breathed out its joy and most secret pain as it consumed away. (278–79)

If, as Denis de Rougemont proposes in his great meditation *Love in the Western World*, Tristan and Iseult remained “the one great European myth of adultery” (18) and reached its apotheosis in Wagner, that myth was inevitably mirrored in contemporary reconstitutions of the story of Francesca, and both narratives take part aggressively in a larger cultural campaign to essentialize the feminine in terms of helpless erotic swoon. In his *Opera and Drama*, Wagner pontificated, “Music is a woman. The nature



of woman is love; but their love is receptive, and totally yielding in its responsiveness. Woman receives her full individuality only at the moment of yielding” (quoted in Rather 222)—a formula strikingly similar to remarks in 1869 by Dante critic Francesco de Sanctis (significantly, a personal friend of Wagner’s):

Francesca remains the type from which the modern poetic imagination has derived its most beloved creations: delicate beings without the strength to resist or react, frail flowers to which the slightest breeze is deadly, all alike in these common traits [. . .] and in the theatre you cannot resist a sense of heartbreak as you see them draw, smiling and carefree, closer and closer to the abyss they are digging for themselves, in which all their youth and beauty will be engulfed, almost before they taste the joys of life.

This is the “tragedy” of woman, varied by a thousand incidents but always in a changeless setting: Ophelia, Juliet, Clara, Thecla, Margaret, Francesca are all related, all have the same destiny stamped on their brow. Man in his struggle against fate may be vanquished, and still hold his soul untamed and rebellious [. . .]. But woman’s aureole is her weakness, and if she struggles victoriously over some overwhelming passion, no moralist can make her into anything but an unesthetic character—virtuous, admirable, but unesthetic. Woman is poetical when she is defeated in her vain struggle against the iron necessity that Dante expressed with such rare energy in the phrase “Amore [. . .] a null’ amato amar perdona” [. . .]. A woman depraved by passion is a creature unnatural and therefore alien and devoid of interest. But the woman who, in the weakness and distress of her struggle, preserves the essential qualities of womanhood—purity, modesty, gentleness, exquisite delicacy of feeling: her, even if guilty, we feel to be part of ourselves, of our common nature, and she arouses the highest interest, draws tears from our eyes, and makes us fall “come corpo morto.” (40–41)

The cult of Wagner and the discourse of adultery exposed on page and proscenium—both movements spilling unrestrained into de Sanctis—thus combined to project upon Francesca the nineteenth century’s increasingly public struggle with desire, a cultural *seiche* about to culminate in Freud. The distance between what Wharton’s friend Henry James called the “attenuated outlines” (*Hawthorne* 56) of Flaxman’s engraving and the undraped *amoureuse* in Giuseppe Palanti’s poster for Zandonai’s opera is enough to confirm what had happened to Francesca’s image by the early twentieth century—as is her cameo appearance in a pornographic classic of the 1890s, *Teleny: A Physiological Romance of Today* (some of it attributed to Oscar Wilde), where an appropriately panting character exclaims, “Let us cling to one another like Dante’s Francesca and Paolo!” (2.20).

## Sexology

In his *Dante and English Poetry* (1983), Steve Ellis documents a surge of interest in the figure of Beatrice from the 1830s to mid-century that issued in a virtual “cult of the *Vita Nuova*”: Victorians “took Beatrice to their hearts,” he proposes, “because they could associate the ‘angiola giovanissima’ (‘youthful angel’) with, let us say, Patmore’s *Angel in the House*” (106). The scarcity of Wharton’s references to Beatrice suggests in itself a cultural supplanting, a rejection of all that Beatrice had come to represent in the Victorian imagination as a paradigm of feminine purity (Berenson recalled a long-outgrown youth in which “women who counted” “were in a realm apart, where animality, sex, did not exist. They were all Beatrices, and I a worshipping Dante” [*Sunset and Twilight* 432]). Sara Teasdale’s 1911 poem “Beatrice” projects a dying Portinari chagrined by her dawning realization of forfeited life: “Keep tryst with Love before Death comes to tryst; / For I, who die, could wish that I had lived / A little closer to the world of men” (ll. 17–19). Closer to Wharton’s own experience is a provocative exchange between Morton Fullerton and Katharine Fullerton, the cousin to whom he was officially engaged at the time he met Wharton. When Fullerton in 1907 sought to compliment Katharine by comparing her to Beatrice, she remonstrated,

I will not be your Beatrice, to triumph in some fantastic Heaven. You shall have me yet—flesh and blood, on this earth. [. . .] I have always hated the *Paradiso*! But I should have hated it more, had I foreseen that you would ever call me Beatrice. [. . .] In Paradise, Dante and Beatrice are not Dante and Beatrice. [. . .] I have always known that if I really loved a man I should rather be to him Gemma than Beatrice, for Gemma must often have made him forget Beatrice. (Fullerton Collection, Beinecke)

Katharine, who as Katharine Fullerton Gerould would later become a writer of fiction in her own right, formulated her resistance in a poem, “Gemma to Beatrice,” published in the June 1910 issue of *Scribner’s*:

Your Dante, worn with hymning you, sought rest  
Within my arms: I kissed the haunted brow  
To slumber. If by sleight of soul, or chance  
Of constellations, Dante’s mind fell prey  
To Beatrice, shall Gemma grudge it her?  
No stars imposed me in his heart; he chose  
Gemma to wife, and Gemma stands defended

Before all men, as you before all angels.  
I have shed many tears, Madonna, for your sake:  
Now I am wise, and would not change with you,  
Who have known love but as the angels know it,  
In Heaven, where none gives or takes to wife.  
I have loved Dante, whom you did not love;  
I wedded Dante, whom you did not wed;  
I hold no woman is so blest as I—  
No other woman born will have had this. (ll. 59–74)

Like the contemporary fascination with Francesca shared by Wharton, these examples suggest a shift of focus in what might be called Dante's typology of the feminine: the spiritual Beatrice challenged or repudiated in favor of the earthier Gemma Donati, wife of his body, or the passionate Francesca.<sup>9</sup> But in the course of things Francesca herself was due for supersession, and her too-close identification with the cultural obsessions of the nineteenth century is confirmed by her relative absence from the emergent discourse of the twentieth. The volume of *Scribner's* in which Katharine Fullerton's poem appeared also featured an advertisement for W. H. Walling's 1902 *Sexology*: the title (deprecated by C. S. Lewis, the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes, as a "modern barbarism") suggesting the fashionable researches of Freud, Richard Krafft-Ebing, and, more popularly, Havelock Ellis (writers to whom Wharton and her correspondents casually refer), which rendered all of literature into material for the psychoanalyst (and it may be telling that in 1915 Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* recalls the tempest-driven Paolo and Francesca in terms of psychological and environmental determinism [355–56]). Freud, in a fairly offhand comment in his essay "Leonardo da Vinci," was probably the first to consult the *Commedia* in the interests of psychology (*Works* 11.120); Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1889) contains no such reference, but Ellis invokes the authority of Dante from time to time. In his autobiographical *Impressions and Comments*, he refers to Francesca's line "Nessun maggior dolore," remarking that Dante "had to write of Hell, and Hell were no longer Hell if the lovely memory of earth still cheered its inmates" (70); in the multi-volume *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (begun 1899) he quotes *Purg.* 8.75–78 in speculation about kissing (2.1.22). Beyond these, however, his interest in Dante centers on matters newly topical, the question of obscenity in literature (*Impressions* 184) and of homosexuality: "The fact that homosexuality is especially common

among men of exceptional intellect was long since noted by Dante” (*Studies* 2.2.26).

As Foucault and now many others have noted, the word “homosexuality” was coined around 1870, heralding the new and presumably scientific taxonomies of sexual behavior on which Ellis (often ingeniously) builds. Wilde, the consensus representative of *fin de siècle* sexual reconfigurations, seems to have been most attracted to Dante as wandering outcast (see, for example, “At Verona” and “Ravenna,” *Poems* 46, 54), even before his own catastrophic trial and imprisonment. Wilde’s sometime American friend Frank Harris endorsed the pity of Wilde’s disgrace by reference to *Inferno* 5, intoning, “Some of us still persist in believing that Oscar Wilde might easily have won and never again been caught in that dreadful wind which whips the victims of sensual desire about unceasingly, driving them hither and thither without rest in that awful place where ‘Nulla speranza gli conforta mai’ (No hope ever comforts!)” (*Oscar Wilde* 2.405). But Harris attempted to console Wilde further, he tells us, by quoting *Inferno* 15:

“I was just thinking that it was [Dante’s] great love for Latini which gave him the deathless words:

. . . . “Non dispetto, ma doglia  
La vostra condizion dentro mi fisse.”  
“Not contempt but sorrow . . .”

“Oh, Frank,” cried Oscar, “what a beautiful incident! I remember it all. I read it last winter in Naples. [. . .] Of course Dante was full of pity as are all great poets, for they know the weakness of human nature.” (*Oscar Wilde* 2.428–29)

While Harris’s veracity is always in question, Wilde implies a similar sentiment in *De Profundis*: “Those who have the artistic temperament [cf. *Inf.* 15.106–108] go into exile with Dante and learn how salt is the bread of others, and how steep the stairs” (100; cf. *Par.* 17.58–60). Evidently Wilde and Harris were reading *Inferno* 15 much as some of their contemporaries were reading *Inferno* 5, as iconic model—but one suspects too that Francesca’s story was beginning to lose *cachet*. The dozen or so mentions of Dante in Harris’s self-admiring autobiography *My Life and Loves* refer not at all to the Franciscan paradigm: Harris’s sexual adventures, as he recreates them, had nothing in them of rapturous submission to forbidden lust or overpowering emotion but were instead calculated and rather

standardized conquests, consummated less by orgasm than by his lovers' predictable testimonials to his skill (and by their grateful submission to his courteously proffered prophylactic syringe). Yet Harris too appropriated Dante to approve, authorize, and dignify what might now be recognized as his signature theme, the zealous campaign against Victorian repression:

"I hate English prudery," I replied, "and English hypocrisy. Life in England is like life in an English Sunday school, with a maiden-lady as teacher and an atmosphere of deadly dullness. Shall we never get to the larger freedom of Dante, if not that of Goethe?"

"Was Dante ever free in that sense?" asked Arnold.

"Surely," I replied, "some of his humor is the jolly humor of a naughty little boy who puts out his tongue at you and worse."

"Really?" doubted Arnold. "I remember nothing like that in Dante!"

"Here is one verse," and I quoted from the end of the twenty-first canto of the *Inferno*:

Per l'argine sinistro volta dienno  
Ma prima avea ciascun la lingua stretta  
Co' denti verso lor duca, per cenno:  
Ed egli avea del cul fatto trombetta.  
"And he made a trumpet of his behind!"

"How strange," laughed Arnold. "I never noticed it. I must have read over it!" (410)

The reception of Dante, as of other classic texts, depended heavily on such "reading over," a complacent imperviousness to passages unserviceable to readers' agendas. But the examples from Wilde and Harris, as representatives of the new century's sexual frankness, also suggest reasons for Francesca's virtual withdrawal from popular culture after the First World War. As Tanner's study acknowledges, the adultery theme in fiction fell into obsolescence with the rise of modernism and a *blasé* postwar sexuality: worn out by overuse, the genre survived only in debased form, as melodrama, and became ridiculous. Nicholas White points out further that the novel of adultery gave way to "the incest motif as an apparently more radical conjugation of human desires" ("Carnal Knowledge" 126). As an icon, Francesca seems to have slipped into the same trajectory: her image glutted nineteenth-century culture and was finally taken over by the movies, with several silent films on the story originating in the United States or imported from Italy between 1907 and 1911 (Uricchio and Pearson 98; see also Iannucci, "Americanization" 73–74, "Dante and Film" 246–47), one of them ignorantly titled *Francesca Deramini* (Figure 4).<sup>10</sup> In

the same way, the American Arthur Foote's "symphonic prologue" *Francesca da Rimini*, composed in 1890 for his patron Isabella Stewart Gardner, was sold ten years later to the Aeolian Piano Company as rolls for parlor models (Tawa 259). Like the novel of adultery, the turn-of-the-century Francesca degenerated into kitsch—and in the presence of exciting new revelations about previously unspeakable sexual forms, her act of adultery was simply no longer very interesting. Inevitably, perhaps, she was doomed to follow her Romantic and Victorian predecessors toward the kind of caricature that precedes extinction, as suggested by this incident recorded by Siegfried Sassoon on the eve of the Great War:

One evening I sat next to the new arrival, a fashionable young woman whose husband (as I afterwards ascertained) was campaigning in the Cameroons. Her manner implied that she was ready to take me into her confidence, intellectually, but my responses were cumbersome and uneasy, for her conversation struck me as containing a good deal of trumped-up intensity. A fine pair of pearls dangled from her ears, and her dark blue eyes goggled emptily while she informed me that she was taking lessons in Italian. She was "dying to read Dante," and had already started the Canto about Paolo and Francesca, adored D'Annunzio, and had been reading his Paolo and Francesca (in French). "Life is so wonderful—so great—and yet we waste it all in this dreadful War!" she exclaimed. (257)

### Francesca in Wharton's fiction

The first decade of the twentieth century thus saw a climactic burst—one is tempted to say a metastasis—of Francescas, in stage plays, in musical composition, in poetry, and in the early cinema: small wonder that 1908 was simultaneously the cultural moment for Charles Yriarte's summary *Francesca da Rimini in Legend and History* and Wharton's evocation of Dante's character in the private notation of her journal. With Fullerton's withdrawal in her forty-ninth year, however, Wharton's erotic life appears to have closed: her close companion Henry James (whose infrequent Dante allusions are respectful but perfunctory; for examples, see his *Collected Travel Writings*) was uninterested in anything but intellectual intimacy, and though her last decades were comforted by the presence of Walter Berry, their relationship remained by all accounts platonic. A frequent visitor at the Florentine villa of Berenson, whose amorous vagaries had become completely unabashed, Wharton seems in later life to have

adopted the easy flippancy toward sex that tended to characterize modernist intellectual discourse after Bloomsbury; according to Berenson's brother-in-law Logan Pearsall Smith, Wharton "loved ribaldry" (265). In 1935 she wrote Berenson, *à propos* of a story by Alberto Moravia involving incest, that she herself had "an incest donnée up my sleeve that would make them all look like nursery rhymes" (*Letters* 589); this was probably the "Beatrice Palmato" (invoking no doubt Beatrice Cenci, the dark inversion of Dante's saint) fragment discovered and made public by R. W. B. Lewis (*Edith Wharton* 544–48), a graphic depiction of father-daughter incest that perfectly parallels the thematic displacement of adultery identified by Nicholas White. For Wharton, Francesca had perhaps outlived her imaginative usefulness.

Yet Francesca continued to hover in Wharton's memory. In her memoir "A Backward Glance" (1934)—its title a nod to Walt Whitman's "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," possibly in deference to the American poet's contemporary status as prophet of sexual freedom—Wharton recounts the case of her cousin George Alfred, mysteriously anathematized by her family. "But, Mamma, *what did he do?* 'Some woman'—my mother muttered. For our shadowy Paolo and Francesca, circling together in the 'accursèd air,' somewhere outside the safe boundaries of our old New York, gave me, I verily believe, my earliest glimpse of the poetry that Goethe missed in the respectable world of the Hirschgraben, and that my ancestors assuredly failed to find or create, between the Battery and Union Square" (803). In "A Little Girl's New York," published posthumously in *Harper's* in 1938, she recalls a childhood glance at a fashionable courtesan: "she was [. . .] my first doorway to romance, destined to become for me successively Guinevere and Francesca da Rimini, Beatrix Esmond [from Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*] and the Dame aux Camélias. And in the impoverished emotional desert of old New York such a glimpse was like the mirage of palm trees in the desert" (*Uncollected Critical Writings* 276). Both instances recall the letter of 1909 already cited, where Wharton had noted that "as I cast my eye backward over literature, I seemed to remember a few other neurotic women who were discontented with their husbands & relations—one Clytemnestra, e.g., & Phaedra, & Iseult, & Anna Karenine [*sic*]<sup>11</sup> & Pia Tolomei, too Francesca da Rimini—who still live in the imagination, & will, I fancy, outlast Shaw [. . .]" (*Letters* 175). Like others of her time (and indeed of our own), Wharton appropriated Francesca in modes determined by culture but

powerfully addressing her own concerns: as a romantic *figura* of passion, Francesca outshone what Wharton saw as a smothering respectability; assimilated into the advance-guard of sexual liberation, she authorized Wharton's long-deferred erotic fulfillment; a victim of political and economic exchange, she anticipated Wharton's ambivalence toward the constrictions of social class. But it is also evident that as Dante's Francesca had superimposed herself on the literary template of Guinevere, Wharton's Francesca similarly assumed her place in a frieze of tragic lovers, both classic and contemporary, whose outlines increasingly blurred.

While not necessarily invoked by name, Francesca may therefore be said to shadow nearly every one of Wharton's "women discontented with their husbands"—one thinks of the kiss that "burned and burned" (*Novels* 1204) on the lips of Ellen Olenska and Newland Archer in *The Age of Innocence* (1919)—and she neatly aligns with archetypes more clearly foregrounded in Wharton's fiction. In her study of Wharton's fascination with Persephone, for example, Candice Waid does not mention Francesca but acknowledges Wharton's attraction to Iseult (subject of her poem "Ogrin the Hermit"): defining Wharton's fictional mode, realism, as "a sexually charged term," Waid asserts Wharton's "preoccupation with the relationship between desire [. . .] and death that purchases immortality" (59). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in another thematic resonance of Francesca's story, propose that for Wharton the "erotically illicit" "clearly meant what represents [. . .] a fissure in the 'laws' of female chastity and male-dominant marriage that govern heterosexual relations in patriarchal culture, or system of exchange" (164). As Judith Armstrong notes in her study of the genre (61), Wharton escapes the adultery novel's predictability by leaving the act merely potential; but Wharton's representations of erotic verge inevitably recall those embraces on page or stage for which Francesca functioned as one of several models. In Wharton's novella *Summer* (1917), for example: "Since the day before, she had known exactly what she would feel if Harney should take her in his arms: the melting of palm into palm and mouth on mouth, and the long flame burning her from head to foot" (*Novellas* 211–12). And in "The Pretext," published in *Scribner's* in 1908, the year she commenced her affair, Wharton composes a moment so culturally familiar as to be almost mannered: "her companion remained motionless. But his nearness had become something formidable and exquisite—something she had never before imagined. A



flush of guilt swept over her—vague reminiscences of French novels and opera plots” (*Collected Stories* 647).

### Afterword

“The value of books,” Wharton wrote in 1903 in an essay provocatively titled “The Vice of Reading,” “is proportionate to what may be called their plasticity—their quality of being all things to all men, of being diversely moulded by the impact of fresh forms of thought” (*Uncollected Critical Writings* 99). If nothing else, Wharton’s “story of reading” demands recognition of literature’s trace on flesh and blood, a recognition necessary to studies of reception aspiring beyond the merely forensic. But the wealth of criticism on *Inferno* 5 over the last half-century (for a summary, see Balfour) also exposes readings and renditions discussed in this essay as embarrassingly naive and superficial—particularly since, as is often pointed out, the canto itself so unmistakably problematizes the act of reading as presumably to set all readers on their guard. As post-New Critical critics, it is easy for us to forget how much our appreciation of Dante depends on the close reading techniques and attention to irony the New Critics pioneered, without which Francesca’s deceptions remain submerged. It is worth noting, therefore, that interpretations of Francesca’s story now basic to Dante scholarship were at pains to struggle free from the inherited ballast. René Girard, for instance, in his respected essay “The Mimetic Desire of Paolo and Francesca,” begins with an exercised rejection of popular tradition:

Paolo and Francesca, the adulterous lovers of *The Divine Comedy*, enjoyed a very special popularity at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The two young people defy human and divine laws and appear to bring about the triumph of passion, even in the realm of eternity. What does Hell matter to them, since they are together? In the minds of innumerable readers, in modern times as well as in the Romantic era, the infernal setting, however artistically remarkable, is no more than a deferential nod in the direction of the moral and theological conventions of the time. [. . .] Yet this romantic reading is obviously contrary to the spirit of *The Divine Comedy*. [. . .] George Sand and Alfred de Musset, leaving for Italy, took themselves for Paolo and Francesca but never questioned their spontaneity. (1)

And Renato Poggioli, in his famous article for *PMLA* in 1957, denounces both De Sanctis and D’Annunzio (352–56) and compares Francesca to *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*, revisioning all three texts as

“*contre-romans*” (334–38) that depict sentimental passion but ultimately display its error.

Foundational to our current critical enterprise, these and other studies wrest *Inferno* 5 from its assumed infection by popular and artistic culture, recontextualize it through attention to patristic theology, and effectively repossess it, along with the rest of Dante, for the formal setting of the academy: that reading the *Commedia* now “make[s] it difficult to uncover [. . .] an image of female desire that is not in and of itself transgressive” (Jacoff 195), an assessment so much better informed than Wharton’s, confirms their success. Outside the academy, in the English-speaking world at least, Francesca still appears occasionally as a kind of after-effect: in Frances Fleetwood’s 1972 novel *Concordia*, for example, ostensibly the diary of Francesca’s nubile daughter, or in the conspicuously-named Francesca of Robert James Waller’s latter-day adultery novel, *The Bridges of Madison County* (1992)—or, in testimony to the canto’s continuing erotic power, in a poem by Edward Hirsch that concludes “and yet I cannot turn from you, my wanton; / our heaven will always be our hell, a swoon” (Hawkins and Jacoff 403). Most recently, the name has been adopted by an Australian multi-media artist, “a virulent girl vector blasting heretically through iridescent spiralspace” (*Screenarts*). For the most part, however, the adulterous heroine of Rimini now tells her story within the confines of the university classroom—where new generations of readers nevertheless continue, like Wharton, to mark her words with the impression of their own desires.

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## NOTES

Quotations from Wharton materials at the Lilly Library are cited courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington; Wharton’s letters to Sally (Sara) Norton (held at the Beinecke Library, Yale University) and Morton Fullerton (held at the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin) are reprinted by permission of the Estate of Edith Wharton and the Watkins/Loomis Agency, New York. I am grateful to John Monahan of the Beinecke for supplying me with the letters of Katharine Fullerton (Gerould); to Bonnie Coles, Photo-duplication Services at the Library of Congress, for the illustration from the silent film *Francesca Deramini*; and especially to Meredith McCarthy, Inter-library Lending Associate at the Gordon and Margaret Van Wylen Library, Hope College, for tireless and uncomplaining assistance.

1. The term “story of reading” comes from Culler.

2. In a letter (3 Sept. 1938) to Elesina Tyler, Wharton's literary executor, Emelyn Washburn wrote, "In the spring . . . we often went out on the library roof—my windows opened on it—and read Dante—, as I had done with my father in East Hampton when I was thirteen years old [. . .]." Wharton Papers, Lilly Library (Box 13).

3. In the same letter Emelyn Washburn writes of her father (1819–1881), "He had been an only son, with six sisters and innumerable cousins—one of them, older than he, he was very fond of—she married Waldo Emerson—she died very young and he [Emerson] married again and was living in Concord when my father went to Harvard—Every Sunday my father used to go to Concord and breakfast with the Emersons. 'After breakfast [Emelyn is now apparently quoting from her father] we would go into the study and talk until the neighbours came in—Bronson Alcott the first and he would stride up and down and talk—and last of all would come Margaret Fuller—and then I would look at Cousin Waldo and he would nod and smile at me and I would go out of the side door—I could not stand Margaret Fuller's talk! And I would walk in the wood. When they were all gone Cousin Waldo would join me and we would come back to dinner—and then after dinner we would sit and talk until it was time for me to go home.' He never got over his dislike of clever women who talked too much."

4. In his biography of Dante for the Penguin Lives series, Lewis notes that La Pia "is a classic case of the wife as victim. Edith Wharton, replying (in February 1909) to a young Englishman who had spoken derisively of women who complained about their marriage, named Pia Tolomei, along with Iseult, Francesca da Rimini, and Anna Karenina, as 'women who were discontented with their husbands'" (137).

5. Crawford's play was staged in the French translation of Marcel Schwob; it was not published in English until 1980.

6. The Wharton papers at the Lilly Library also include two undated poems, "Dante" ("Aloft among them all I see thee blaze / And an insufferable splendour sears / My straining eyesight") and a sonnet, "The 'Beata Beatrix' of Rossetti" ("Look on me, Poet, till our souls be one, / For I am Beauty, thou my servitor").

7. Francesca was of course prominent in nineteenth-century poetry. In addition to works cited by Bugliani-Knox, *Literature Online* turns up William Edmondstoune Aytoun and Theodore Martin, "Francesca da Rimini. To Bon Gaultier," *The Book of Ballads* (1849); William Gilmore Simms, "Francesca da Rimini: Episode from Dante," *Poems Descriptive, Dramatic, Legendary and Contemplative* (1853); Henry Ellison, "Dante's 'Francesca da Rimini,'" *Stones from the Quarry* (1875); Eugene Lee-Hamilton, "Francesca da Rimini to Paulo [sic] Malatesta," *Imaginary Sonnets* (1888). Also worth mention are John Reade, "Paolo and Francesca" (*Canadian Monthly* Jan. 1872, 62–63) and Arthur Sherburne Hardy, *Francesca of Rimini: A Poem* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1878). The American Thomas Parsons included "Francesca da Rimini: A Picture by Ary Scheffer" in his *Poems* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854).

8. Henry James reviewed *Francesca da Rimini* and other plays by D'Annunzio for the *Quarterly Review*, April 1904 (383–419). See his *Literary Criticism* 907–43.

9. George Lansing Raymond's poetic drama *Dante* (1909), however, retains the tradition of Gemma's insensitivity, showing her burning the poet's manuscripts.

10. Uricchio and Pearson list four Italian films—*L'Inferno* (Milan, 1909), *Francesca da Rimini* (Pathé, 1910), *Dante e Beatrice* (Ambrosio, 1913), and *Il Paradiso* (Psiche Films, 1911)—and discuss in detail *Francesca da Rimini, Or, The Two Brothers* (1907) and *Francesca da Rimini* (1910), both directed by J. Stuart Blackton for Vitagraph. I have seen the Pathé version and *Francesca Deramini* (Philadelphia, 1907, distributed by Lewis M. Swarb), both at the Library of Congress. Titles for *Francesca Deramini*, which probably ran about eight minutes and appears inspired by Boker, are as follows: (1) "Paola [sic] bears his brother's message: Love at First Sight" (Paolo delivers Giovanni's message, causing Francesca to swoon); (2) "The Meeting" (Francesca swoons with horror at seeing the deformed Giovanni); (3) "The Wedding: Hunchback called to the Wars" (with Giovanni's departure, Paolo and Francesca read their [unidentified] book as the Jester watches); (4) "The Tale Bearer" (here the Jester reports Francesca's infidelity to her husband; Giovanni kills him); (5) "The Hunchback's Revenge" (Giovanni sees the lovers kissing, stabs Francesca, then stabs Paolo as he falls on Francesca's body). See

also Amilcare Iannucci's helpful essay "Dante and Film" and Vittoria Colonnese Benni, "Dante and the Cinema from the Silent to the Digital Era," *DAI* 2000 61.1.9–10A.

11. Wharton here makes an interesting conflation, since Karénine was the author of a massive study of George Sand; Wharton mentions this work in "A Backward Glance" (897). Karénine's account does not include the Francesca allusion recalled by Girard (below): quoted however is a letter in which Musset told Sand, "La postérité répètera nos noms comme ceux de ces amants immortels, qui n'en ont plus qu'un à eux deux, comme Roméo et Juliette, comme Héloïse et Abélard" (2.104).

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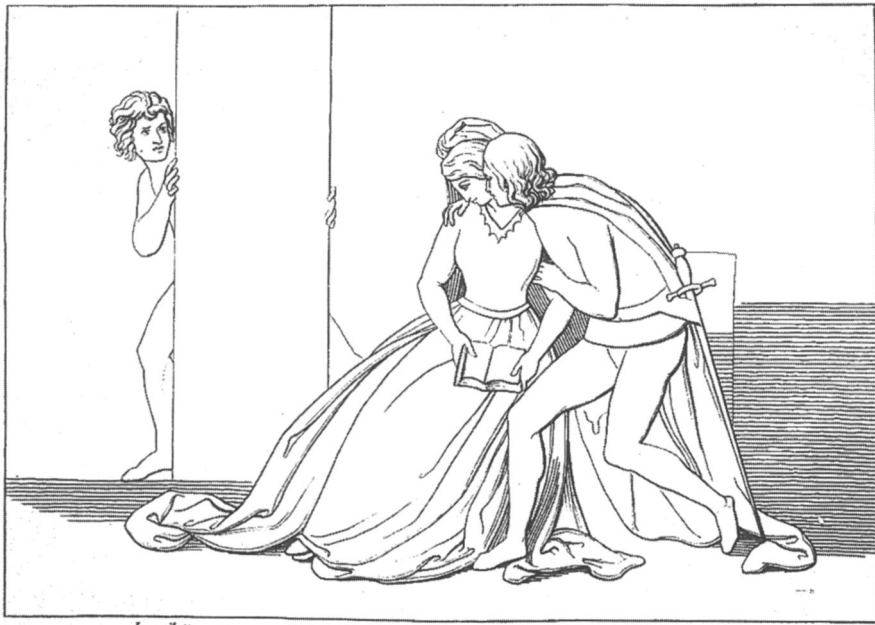
#### *List of Illustrations*

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Fig. 2. Eleanora Duse as Francesca da Rimini (1901). Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Francesca da Rimini*, trans. Arthur Symons (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1902).

Fig. 3. Sarah Bernhardt as Francesca da Rimini (1902). Philip H. Ward Collection of Theatrical Images, 1856–1910, courtesy of the Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.

Fig. 4. Frame from *Franceca Deramini* (Philadelphia, 1907). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Lanciotto

Francesca

Paolo

*La bocca mi baciò tutto ardente;*

Inferno Canto 5.

**Figure 1**—John Flaxman, “Paolo and Francesca” (1793).



**Figure 2**—Eleanora Duse as Francesca da Rimini (1901). Gabriele D’Annunzio, *Francesca da Rimini*, trans. Arthur Symons (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1902).



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**Figure 3**—Sarah Bernhardt as Francesca da Rimini (1902). Philip H. Ward Collection of Theatrical Images, 1856–1910, courtesy of the Annenberg Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania.



**Figure 4**—Frame from *Franceca Deramini* (Philadelphia, 1907). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.



# The Artist as Reader: Buffalmacco's Miniatures of the *Inferno*<sup>1</sup>

KARL FUGELSO

In commenting on *Illuminated Manuscripts of the "Divine Comedy,"* Anthony Pellegrini claimed *Commedia* miniatures "cannot be expected, in any significant degree, to unlock elusive meanings and yet undiscovered aesthetic harmonies in Dante's poem."<sup>2</sup> And he was correct with respect to the text he was reviewing. In concentrating on the iconography of the illustrations, Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss, and Charles Singleton often cover exactly the same territory as do earlier scholars of the *Commedia*. But I would like to challenge Pellegrini's implication that all analyses of the miniatures are doomed to such redundancy. As Teodolinda Barolini and Christopher Kleinhenz have demonstrated, the content of the images still has much to reveal about Dante's text.<sup>3</sup> And if we turn from the iconography of the miniatures to their composition, from their subjects to their construction, we may discover many more insights on the *Commedia*, for only then are we definitely addressing the artist's contributions to the illustrations.

Judging from instructions in the margins of many unfinished manuscripts, medieval miniaturists often received assistance in selecting the subjects and symbols of their illustrations.<sup>4</sup> Though some of the recommendations, such as those in an early fourteenth-century *Commedia* at the University of Budapest, are so short and crude that their author(s) cannot be determined and may include the illuminator him- or herself, other suggestions are so detailed and sophisticated that they are almost certainly the work of a scholarly advisor.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in some cases the recommendations appear to have been so long and complicated that they were written

elsewhere and are referred to in the illustrated manuscripts only by alphabetical markers and by the iconography of the miniatures themselves.<sup>6</sup> For instance, Musée Condé MS 597, which is often dated to approximately 1327–28 and contains the *Inferno* followed by Fra Guido da Pisa's *Expositiones et Glose super Comediam Dantis* and his *Dichiarazione poetica*, has eight letters in consecutive order next to or within eight of the 51 miniatures in the bas-de-page of Guido's commentary.<sup>7</sup> And the iconography of the miniatures suggests that those marks refer to a separate list of highly sophisticated instructions from someone far more learned and far closer to the text than is likely to have been true for the artist and his assistants.<sup>8</sup> Though the illuminators may have brought a knowledge of the *Commedia* to their task—for by 1327 Dante's text had already been copied numerous times, attracted at least four extensive commentaries in addition to Guido's, and been publicly condemned by Guido Vernani da Rimini—some of the iconography is so specific and so subtle yet so vital to Guido da Pisa's interpretation that it suggests the commentator himself advised the illuminators.<sup>9</sup> For example, though even the most scholarly of readers, other than Guido, are not likely to have noticed the commentator's brief reference to Plutus as the "bishop of the avaricious," the artists have bothered to illustrate that demon with a miter and crosier.<sup>10</sup> They have iconographically underscored Guido's subtle defense of Dante's departures from the interests of the Church, particularly Dante's portrayal of Hell as an embodiment of ecclesiastical corruption.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the subjects and symbols of the Musée Condé cycle, and perhaps of many other *Commedia* miniatures, are almost certainly the work of someone other than the illuminators.

Yet even the lengthiest and most sophisticated programs for medieval manuscripts leave ample room for artistic interpretation. For example, though the patron Jean Lebègue insisted that the author-portrait for his translation of Sallust's *Catiline and Jugurtha* should depict, among other things, "ung homme à grant barbe fourchue qui aura en sa teste une coiffe blanche comme l'en souloit porter. Et sera assis en une chayère qui sera bien edifiée et devant soy aura la tablecte sur laquelle il fera semblant de escrire et tout ce que il appartient à ung escripvain quant il est en sa chaière pour escrire," that is, though Lebègue's 227-word description of this one image even specifies how the furniture should be arranged and calls for details as minute as the fork in Sallust's beard, Lebègue could not, of course, fully articulate every aspect of every detail.<sup>12</sup> Nor is he the one

who ultimately gave these verbal descriptions their pictorial form and visually integrated them with each other.<sup>13</sup> He may have recommended models for the images, and the illustrations may have been subject to his approval, but it was the illuminator(s) who ultimately converted the words of Lebègue and other advisors into pictures, who deployed perspective, scale, and other artistic means in such a manner as to construct a narrative that is presumably as clear, consistent, and faithful to its textual source(s) as possible.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, an investigation of such means in *Commedia* miniatures, of not only what is portrayed but also the manner in which it is portrayed, offers a unique window onto how an often overlooked audience perceived Dante's text.

Such an approach may be particularly profitable in the case of Musée Condé MS 597, for this codex features not only an iconographic program that was probably composed by a leading Dante scholar of the early fourteenth century but also a highly sophisticated presentation of that program by a major artist of the time—Buonamico Buffalmacco. For centuries Buffalmacco was believed to be little more than a literary device, a comedic foil employed by Boccaccio and Vasari to underscore the professionalism of other early Trecento artists, such as Giotto.<sup>15</sup> But in 1974 Luciano Bellosi published fourteenth-century documents that establish Buffalmacco as the designer of the *Triumph of Death*, *Last Judgment*, and "*Thebaid*" in the Camposanto at Pisa, as an artist who was so well-respected by his contemporaries that he was chosen to carry out a large fresco cycle in the premier sanctuary of a leading European city.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, Bellosi thereby established the likelihood that Buffalmacco authored the Musée Condé miniatures, for, as Millard Meiss had already noted, there are many indications that those illustrations and the Camposanto frescoes were designed by the same artist.<sup>17</sup> That is to say, Bellosi indirectly yet convincingly defined the Musée Condé miniatures as the work of one of the most prominent and esteemed painters of the early fourteenth century.

Moreover, Buffalmacco's illustrations evidently demonstrate how such an accomplished artist would respond under the most lavish of circumstances, for the Musée Condé codex is one of the richest Italian manuscripts of its time. In addition to featuring numerous illustrations by a leading artist of the day, it has some of the finest script to survive from early fourteenth-century Tuscany; it is constituted from some of the whitest, thinnest, and most pristine vellum available at that time; and it expends a great deal of that parchment on extremely generous margins.

Consequently, Buffalmacco seems to have had tremendous resources at his disposal and may concomitantly have had extraordinarily great assistance and exceptionally wide financial freedom in composing and executing his illustrations.

Those material advantages, however, almost certainly came at a steep personal price to the artist, for the richness of the manuscript suggests Buffalmacco had to satisfy the proportionally greater expectations that would presumably accompany not only the sheer expenditure for such lavishness but also the presentation status implied by such great expenditure. While it is conceivable that the illustrations in this codex were copied wholesale from an earlier manuscript that is now lost, Guido's repeated references to Lucano Spinola, the wealthy scion of a leading Genoese family, combined with the three Spinola coats of arms on the recto of folio 1 and the fourth Spinola coat of arms on the recto of folio 31, make that scenario highly unlikely. And, indeed, there presumably would be no need for each illustration to have an alphabetical reference to a pictorial program if the images were completely or even largely copied from another manuscript. Moreover, it is doubtful that any patron other than one precisely matching Lucano's appearance would have had the presentation image on the recto of folio 31 copied from another source, for that extraordinarily idiosyncratic illustration features the portly, needle-nosed figure of Guido handing a codex to a young dandy of Lucano's approximate age and socio-economic status at the earliest probable date for the manuscript, that is, 1327–28 (Fig. 1).<sup>18</sup> Thus, it seems highly likely that the Musée Condé manuscript not only contains the first illustrated copy of Guido's *Expositiones* and *Dichiarazione*, and perhaps the first presentation copy of any kind for those texts, but also represents a concomitantly high level of expectation for Buffalmacco to accurately and attractively depict Guido's work.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the pressure on Buffalmacco may have been particularly heightened in this instance by the likelihood that, though Lucano apparently could not read Dante's Florentine dialect, he would have brought at least some knowledge of the *Inferno* and perhaps of Guido's perspective on it to the Musée Condé manuscript. The pristine condition of Dante's text in this codex, especially in contrast to the significantly more worn folios of Guido's texts, and the fact that the commentator included a Latin précis of the *Inferno* suggest Lucano could not read Dante's text directly. But he almost certainly was acquainted with it by the time he received

Guido's manuscript, for, as I have already noted in reference to Buffalmacco's knowledge of the text, the *Commedia* seems to have been circulating widely by 1327–28. Moreover, though few documents on Lucano survive, Guido describes his patron as well-traveled, and often in addressing Lucano, the commentator adopts an avuncular tone that suggests his patron was also his pupil, that Lucano was very close to and probably mentored by a scholar who devoted a 204-folio commentary to the *Inferno* and treats Dante as a divine agent.<sup>20</sup> Of course, that is not to say Lucano fully shared Guido's tremendous enthusiasm for Dante's text. But it seems highly likely that any pupil of Guido's, particularly one who had worked with the commentator as recently as apparently had the young Lucano, would come to the *Inferno* with substantial knowledge about it and perhaps even with a profound understanding of the great relevance Guido ascribes to it.

In any case, Buffalmacco's illustrations invite such an interpretation, for they closely adhere to Guido's commentary, particularly with regard to Dante's status, the origins of the *Inferno*, the manner in which that text is to be experienced, and its relevance to the reader. In fact, they begin doing so as early as the author-portrait of Dante on the recto of folio one—the first folio of the *Inferno* and the only folio of Dante's text to be illustrated in this manuscript (Fig. 2). There, in the "N" with which the first canto begins, Dante sits at his desk pressing a pen to parchment with his left hand while gesturing upwards with his right hand and gazing across the folio towards a figure of Virgil. As the latter stares back at Dante from the upper right corner of the folio, the two are linked by that apparent exchange of gazes, as well as by their similarity in scale, the square shape of the frames around the "N" and behind Virgil, the almost identical blue and red tints of those frames, and the vine that merges with the squares as it circumnavigates the text. Yet Virgil and Dante do not seem to share the same spatio-temporal realm, for not only does the text overtly intrude between them, but also, like many biblical prophets in the borders of Trecento frescoes, Virgil is depicted as a half-length figure in a quatre-foil.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in accord with contemporaneous conventions for portraying a vision, Dante seems to look past Virgil. Though Virgil's profile pose and the similarity in scale of the two figures suggest that they are equidistant from the viewer and that Dante can only look directly at Virgil by gazing ninety degrees to the right of the viewer, Dante's left eye is visible. That is to say, he turns his head somewhat towards the viewer and

gazes to the side of Virgil. The latter is thus close enough to Dante's line-of-sight to be a candidate for Dante's attention yet far enough to suggest that, within the fiction of the image, he is appearing only to Dante's "mental eye," that he is a vision rather than a flesh-and-blood presence.

Dante thus assumes a relationship to Virgil that is much like that of the Evangelists to their muses in earlier author-portraits. And, in fact, Buffalmacco's Virgil joins many of those inspirational figures in hovering over the author and gesturing to him with one hand while clutching a book in the other. That is to say, in an echo of such figures as that of the angel in the eighth-century *Godescalc Evangelistary*, Virgil seems to be charging Dante with a mission of the utmost importance.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Dante is shown responding in much the same manner as do the Evangelists in many earlier author-portraits. For example, like the *Godescalc* figure of Matthew, Dante looks up with pen in hand at his muse.<sup>23</sup> And, as noted by Meiss, Dante's gesture upwards with his right hand forms a traditional pictorial response by Evangelists to a divine being.<sup>24</sup> That is to say, he assumes the pose and status of not only an author but also an *auctor*, of an agent for the Word who guarantees Its authenticity and authority.<sup>25</sup>

Of course, in the spirit of *auctorship* as it was defined during the pre-modern age, Dante may influence the shape of his otherwise sacrosanct message from God, for, as is suggested by his being further down the folio than Virgil, Dante is being charged with making the Word accessible and passing It down to his readers. Yet there are several suggestions within the author-portrait itself that the *Commedia* is ultimately faithful to its divine source, that Dante is largely an involuntary instrument of God. First, he does not even look at the folio on which he is writing or about to write. Second, he holds his pen in his left hand, though most people are right handed and the *Commedia* itself suggests Dante was among them.<sup>26</sup> And third, though Dante turns slightly more toward the viewer than does Virgil, and though Dante may to some degree be responsible for making the Word accessible to his readers, he is compositionally distinguished from the world outside of the illustration. That is to say, though he may not face directly towards Virgil, he is gazing almost ninety degrees away from the viewer and does not seem to be aware of the viewer's presence. Moreover, in a manuscript of largely unframed illustrations, he is distinguished from the world outside of the image by not only the square border that surrounds him but also the conjunction of the dark groundline with the "N" that curls above him. And, like many of the Evangelists in

earlier author-portraits, he presents the viewer with only blank folios, with an eternal deferment of the Word made flesh. Thus, while portrayed in accord with the definition of an *auctor* as influencing a message from God and rendering it (more) accessible to readers, he is distinguished from all other authors who do not at the same time fulfill the other function of an *auctor*, who do not preserve and guarantee the essence of one or more messages received from above.

That treatment of Dante may be unique in means, for, in fact, it departs from the approach of all other *Commedia* illuminators, from their tendency to give Dante greater agency over his text.<sup>27</sup> But Buffalmacco's theme is shared by Guido da Pisa, for, as Steven Botterill notes, Guido presents the *Commedia* as, above all, an inspired vision granted to a prophetic Dante.<sup>28</sup> That is to say, Guido treats Dante as a true *auctor* and repeatedly compares the *Commedia* to holy scripture. In Guido's preface, for example, he draws parallels between the *Commedia* as a whole and the writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. Noting that the fifth chapter of Daniel describes a disembodied hand appearing in the king's dining room and writing "Mane, Thechel, Phares," Guido claims that "this hand is our new poet Dante" and that those three words correspond to his three "cantiche," for "just as from the hand comes forth a gift, so from Dante there is given to us this most lofty work."<sup>29</sup> Guido then goes on to compare the *Commedia* to the book that appears in Ezekiel's vision, claiming that it, too, is written "within and without," that it, too, contains "not only the letter but also the allegory."<sup>30</sup> And he maintains that Dante's three cantiche perfectly correspond to the three divisions of that book and of Noah's ark: the *Inferno* invokes the first subject of the book, woe, and the first chamber of the ark, in which were kept the wild and undomesticated animals; *Purgatorio* corresponds to the second subject of Ezekiel's book, lamentations, and to the second chamber of the ark, in which were kept the mild animals; and *Paradiso* parallels the third subject in Ezekiel's book, song, and the third chamber of the Ark, in which lived men and birds, "that is saints and angels exalted in glory."<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Guido even draws such analogies in the language of the Church, as in quoting the liturgical phrase "glory and jubilation" ("laus et iubilatio") to describe the subject of both *Paradiso* and the third portion of Ezekiel's book.<sup>32</sup> That is to say, in both form and content, Guido's commentary suggests that Dante was divinely inspired.

Nor was Guido evidently content with mere implication, for he sometimes explicitly states that the *Commedia* came from God. In his preface he claims that Dante

“can well be called the word of the prophet who says: ‘God gave me a learned tongue.’ And this: ‘My tongue is the pen of a scribe writing speedily.’ For he was indeed the pen of the Holy Spirit, with which pen the Holy Spirit wrote speedily for us both the penalties of the damned and the glory of the blessed.”<sup>33</sup>

Shortly thereafter Guido adds, “the Holy Spirit itself, through (Dante), openly confuted the wicked deeds of prelates and kings and princes of the earth.”<sup>34</sup> And in the *expositiones* for Canto 1, Guido claims that while Dante was “still living in the flesh,” he “was allowed to see hell, purgatory, heaven, and even the most blessed Trinity itself.”<sup>35</sup> Guido rules out the possibility that Dante’s visit to the afterlife was physical, claiming repeatedly that the poet “beheld in an imaginary seeing those very places where the souls go after the death of their bodies” and frequently describing the narrative as a “vision.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the commentator never specifies whether Dante mentally traveled to the other world or whether God planted the vision in his mind. But in either case Guido maintains that the *Commedia* ultimately sprang from a divine source.

Of course, claiming that the *Commedia* came from God was an invitation to be attacked, not least because Dante’s text takes many positions that run counter to Church doctrine of the period.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Guido seems to have anticipated such assaults, for during his explanation of the first canto, he interjects: “I urge you, o reader not to judge or condemn (Dante) if it seems to you that this author acts contrary to the Catholic faith in any place or passage.”<sup>38</sup> And Guido attempts to fend off attacks on himself and Dante not only by suggesting that the poet merely seems to depart from Church doctrine but also by ascribing any such apparent departure in his own commentary to error and by repenting for that error beforehand: “if I say something inept in wanting to explain the author’s text, so that nothing remains unpardoned, as of now I revoke and annul it and submit myself to the correction and punishment of the Holy Roman Church and its officials.”<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Guido deflects criticism by sometimes retreating from the more extreme implications of defining Dante as a passive agent of divine will. God may have planted Dante’s admirable devotion “to narrating or explaining to us regarding the punishment or glory attributed to man himself,” and He may have chosen



Dante for his principle aim of wanting “to remove the living from their miserable state . . . [and] to lead them to glory,” but, according to some of Guido’s comments, Dante himself was responsible for the means by which he achieved these divine ends.<sup>40</sup> For example, having quoted Isidore of Seville on the function of poets as “transforming real deeds by means of oblique configurations with a certain grace into other states,” Guido notes that Dante “invokes the Muses, narrates deeds, and composes and makes many fabulous matters in a beautiful and charming style.”<sup>41</sup> And as for the sinners, “we must not believe that they are actually there, but rather understand them as examples, for when (Dante) treats of some vice, in order that we better understand it, he presents as an example some man who was full of that vice.”<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Guido notes that in having the Pilgrim find himself in the dark woods at the start of the *Inferno*, Dante “desiring to instruct man who is placed between contrary premises, persuades with poetry in this instance by an example of his own.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, Guido joins Buffalmacco in defining Dante as essentially an *auctor*, as a mortal agent who shaped the expression of a message from God and who is to blame for its flaws but who also serves as a guarantor of its divine origins and authority.

Of course, as Guido and Buffalmacco define Dante as a divine agent and at least allow that he may in fact have experienced the events he describes in his text, they permit a wide range of allegorical approaches to the *Commedia*. Yet in the bas-de-page on the recto of folio 1, Buffalmacco privileges one approach over all others, for there, just beneath the first 75 lines of the *Inferno*, he portrays the leopard, lion, and wolf in paintings of medallions that appear to be suspended from the vine surrounding the text above them (Fig. 2). That is to say, he establishes a play among optical illusionism, contextual non-sequiturs, and conventional modes of symbolism that underscores the presence of each while obfuscating the distinctions among them. He suggests that the beasts, and by extension the *Commedia* as a whole, should be read as a figural rather than traditional allegory, as having simultaneous and equal meanings on multiple metaphorical strata that cannot be identified with, or ranked relative to, a single meaning that is seen as being most essential to the signifieds.

On the most basic levels of perception, the three beasts are blatantly presented as symbols, for, in addition to resembling their flesh-and-blood counterparts outside of the illustrations, they adhere to numerous pre-modern conventions of signification, many of which contribute to and/

or stem from their format. They are each closely encircled by two or more rings that invoke the rims of medallions and seem to be suspended from the vine above them. Moreover, all three beasts strike heraldic poses that closely echo emblems on many early fourteenth-century coins and medallions: the lion and leopard raise their front paws, prick up their ears, and arch their tails, while the wolf lowers its head, raises its hackles, and tucks its tail. And, other than perhaps the note of menace such poses introduce to the images, all three beasts are largely divorced from their narrative context, for neither Virgil nor the Pilgrim appears in the base-of-page and the background within the circles is completely blank. Thus, the beasts are overtly presented as if they each embody at least one thing in addition to their flesh-and-blood counterparts.

Precisely what that additional thing or things may be cannot be determined directly and concretely from the illustrations, for neither Buffal-macco nor anyone else has labeled the figures. But, in the means by which the illuminator signifies that the beasts represent something(s) in addition to their flesh-and-blood counterparts, he lays the foundation for interpreting those images as figural allegories. Indeed, he would seem to do so in part through the very lack of captions in these illustrations, for labels would almost certainly favor one or more metaphorical identities over all others, and it is precisely in the absence of such privileging that the overtly symbolic format of the depicted beasts anchors the pictorial echoes of the manner in which figural allegories function in the text. Rather than merely reinforce the symbolism of the beasts by portraying them and their medallion settings as entirely two-dimensional, that is, by underscoring their two-fold representational status as images of emblems, Buffal-macco plays on the form and function of medallions in such a manner as to introduce the beasts as metaphors into the world outside of the illustrations, to suggest that they protrude as sculpted emblems into the viewer's space and have relevance as symbols to him or her. Indeed, to some degree, the figures themselves imply that they have a presence outside of the illustration, for, though in some ways they advertise that they are symbols, they simultaneously resemble their flesh-and-blood counterparts to an extraordinary degree. Rather than represent their signifieds by merely a crude contour, as do some devices on coins and medallions of that time, they are carefully outlined and, through many strikingly minute interior lines and points, subtly fleshed out. Moreover, particularly given that many of the other illustrations in the manuscript are largely uncolored

or are tinted in primary colors and pastels that depart from their signifieds outside of Buffalmacco's miniatures, the three beasts are painted with exceptional faithfulness to the hues of their flesh-and-blood counterparts: the leopard is a gentle tan with dark brown spots; the lion is golden, apart from its eyes; and the wolf is a dark brown with touches of gray. Admittedly, the facial features on all three figures depart from those on their flesh-and-blood counterparts, especially in the resemblance of the lion to a house cat. But they are considerably more accurate than those on many other Trecento illustrations of wild animals.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, that evident verisimilitude is paralleled and perhaps reinforced by the apparent accuracy of other features, such as the shape and distribution of the spots on the leopard, the proportions of all three figures, the confinement of their poses to the anatomical limits of their flesh-and-blood counterparts, and, perhaps above all, the fact that they seem to have volume. The thickness of the contours for the figures varies in such a way as to suggest that those edges curve into the distance and, concomitantly, that the figures have depth, that they do indeed occupy space. For example, the back of the lion is darker and more shadowed than his chest, which suggests his torso has enough substance to impede a light source coming from the direction in which he faces. Yet neither his shading nor that of the other two beasts is so heavy as to imply that the figures are free-standing, that they have flesh and fully occupy a space outside of the illustration. Indeed, the shadows are so slight as to suggest that the figures are mere reliefs, that they participate in the world outside of the illustrations not as actual animals but as emblems on medallions.

And that illusion is bolstered by the depiction of the medallions themselves, for they, too, invoke multiple principles of optical realism as it was often manifested in early fourteenth-century art. In particular, they, too, have shading that suggests volume and substance. Their rims comprise rings of several different hues that darken towards their inner edges and, in the case of the leopard and wolf, towards their outer edges as well. Thus, the rims, and implicitly the rest of the medallions, seem to cast a slight shadow and to protrude from the folio in proportion to that shadow. Moreover, the lion and wolf may be perceived as occupying medallions hanging in part from hinges that have early fourteenth-century counterparts outside of these illustrations, for their medallions are painted beneath circular or kidney-shaped beads that invoke side views of hinges from which actual medallions were sometimes suspended during the fourteenth

century. Indeed, the brackets for the hinge above the wolf even have a degree of shading and relief, as they, too, darken towards their edges. Thus, the beasts are presented by their own optical illusionism and by that of their setting as symbols participating in the world outside of the illustration and, in that role, as having relevance for Dante's audience.

Moreover, through departures from the form and function commonly associated with actual medallions, that is, through abstractions that may seem to diminish the immediacy of the beasts' metaphorical identity, Buf-falmacco welcomes the viewer to a more profound engagement with the unfolding of meaning for the figures and perhaps to a heightened awareness of the relevance that this meaning may hold for the viewer. The resemblance of the painted medallions to their metal counterparts outside of these illustrations is betrayed by the unlikelihood that such medals would be suspended from a vine and by the even greater improbability that they would be attached to such a vine not by ribbons or chains but by the leaves that seem to spring from the medallion rims. Moreover, any verisimilitude that the illustrations may seem to possess is also undermined by the departure of the leaves from the patterns of shadow and depth for the medallions. Whereas the surfaces of the latter are carefully shaded in such a manner as to convey volume and relief, the surfaces of the leaves are decorated with a merely schematic pattern of veining. A difference in tone with an adjacent leaf or with another subject may contribute to the perception that the composition as a whole has a greater three-dimensionality than it otherwise might have. But each leaf in and of itself does not approach the same degree of relief and sculptural presence as that of the medallions. Like the other organic forms that sprout around the vine, these leaves seem to cling to the folio and belong more to its two-dimensional field than to the three-dimensional space in front of it. That is to say, the illusion that the beasts physically participate in the world outside of the illustration is resisted not only by the identity of the depicted device for hanging the medallions but also by the form through which those devices are depicted.

Of course, this juxtaposition of different conventions for representation underscores the fact that they are indeed conventions of representation, for, as the medallions seemingly depart from the folio and the leaves seemingly cling to it, they highlight the presence of the folio and their own fabrication on that support. In other words, they establish the self-reflexivity that defines allegory, particularly the subtle form of self-reflexivity

that characterizes the *Commedia* and other figural allegories. In much the same manner that Dante often hints at the metaphorical from within the literal rather than having the metaphorical overtly disrupt the literal, that is to say, in the same spirit with which Dante claims the she-wolf is a product of envy (*Inf.* 1.111) and with which he endows that beast with a supernatural presence in every Italian town (*Inf.* 1.109) rather than explicitly labeling her “avarice,” so Buffalmacco embeds the metaphorical in the literal. He preserves a distinction between the two, but he reveals that difference only through subtle references to their media and to the context in which those media often appear, as well as through the implied functioning of their identity as medallion emblems. Particularly since the beasts closely resemble some numismatic signifiers of the period, the format suggests that the beasts have (another) metaphorical identity on the reverse of the medallions. The illustrations do not specify exactly what that identity is, but they do point to its existence and do somewhat describe its relationship to the visible images of the beasts. Whereas traditional images of allegory have attributes that overtly privilege the metaphorical over the literal and thereby blatantly advertise the juxtaposition of the two, the medallion format of the Musée Condé miniatures connects the two identities of the beasts by placing them on the same object yet distinguishes them by providing them with distinct surfaces that cannot be seen at the same time.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the format suggests that the emblem on the far side of each medallion is not a strictly metaphorical counterpart of the beast on the near side but rather another metaphor of a third subject, for, among the numerous coins and medallions invoked by the format, are many that represent their issuers by pairing heraldic animals with coats of arms or patron saints. And in that context, the numismatic properties of the medallions are of course also reinforced by the number and devices of the three Spinola escutcheons in the right margin of the folio (Fig. 2). Presumably these particular coats of arms are not intended to be paired with the beasts, for Buffalmacco would surely not want to associate his patron with the vices that the lion, leopard, and wolf represent. But as a trope the escutcheons do invoke the sort of emblem that might appear on the other side of the medallions. Thus, they underscore the echoes of Dantean allegory in the operation of the medallions.

The escutcheons, moreover, provide a model for reading the bestial allegories not only in terms of other contexts to which they refer but also in relationship to the illusionistic principles at play in this illustration cycle.

Seeming to hang from leaves or to rest on other organic forms that sprout from the vine surrounding the text, the shields have the same pictorial relationship to the folio as do the medallions. The escutcheons, too, are three-dimensional vehicles illogically attached to the vine by emphatically two-dimensional vegetal forms. And given the other parallels between the escutcheons and the medallions, these pictorial analogies underscore that the beasts are not just literal representations of a lion, a leopard, and a wolf but, like the purely symbolic coats of arms, also have at least one other metaphorical meaning. Moreover, the ease with which the coats of arms may be deciphered, particularly by the only named reader of this manuscript, Lucano, suggests that the metaphorical meaning of the beasts and, implicitly, the rest of the *Commedia* may also be unlocked.

In tandem with the escutcheons, then, the medallions complement the portraits of Dante and Virgil at the top of the folio. They not only tell but also enact one way in which the *Commedia* may operate. That is to say, standing at the physical threshold to the *Inferno* and embodying its narrative threshold, they suggest how the text is to be interpreted even as they offer to engage the viewer in that process. Yet, though the medallions may articulate the metaphorical levels and the functioning of Dante's particular brand of allegory, as well as demonstrate the centrality of the interpreter to the ultimate meaning of the text, these images do not, in and of themselves, provide enough information to solve these particular allegories, to fully decipher their subjects or the content of the text. That is to say, they insist that the viewer needs an outside interpreter to thoroughly comprehend this allegory, to bridge the gap between procedure and application.

And, on the recto of folio 31, Buffalmacco suggests to whom in fact the viewer should turn for a reliable interpretation of the *Inferno*—none other than Guido himself. At the top of the folio, which is the first of Guido's preface and, codicologically speaking, the second to be illustrated in the manuscript, the artist depicts Daniel translating the writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace (Fig. 3). Just below this image is the declaration by Guido that the instrument of that message, the disembodied hand at right, represents Dante, which, of course, implies that Daniel represents Guido and, far less flatteringly, that Belshazzar and his companions represent Guido's readers. However, the viewer may not need to read Guido's preface to perceive these three analogies. Indeed, if the viewer is aware that the Musée Condé manuscript primarily comprises the *Inferno* and a commentary on that text, he or she may not even need knowledge of the

Bible to discern that the *Inferno* is important and that Guido's text is essential to understanding it, for Buffalmacco articulates these points by purely pictorial means.

With regard to the importance of Dante's text, Buffalmacco establishes a powerful motive for Guido's efforts by a subtle and largely artistic underscoring of an iconographic incongruity in the image. According to the Bible (Dan. 5:7–13), the disembodied hand completed the writing on the wall long before Daniel translated it, for, prior to even summoning the prophet, Belshazzar had all of the royal astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers attempt to decipher the mural message. Yet, though Daniel's open mouth, pointing finger, and contorted pose suggest he is in the middle of interpreting the writing on the wall, the wall itself is blank and the disembodied hand presses an index finger to the upper left corner of that surface as if it has not yet started, or has only just begun, to record the prophecy of Belshazzar's doom. That is to say, two discrete moments of the narrative have been conflated in such a fashion as to underscore the supernatural origin of Daniel's subject and to suggest that the ultimate source of the *Commedia* is no less miraculous than that for the writing on the wall.

Of course, as mentioned earlier, Guido da Pisa may have chosen the subject of this illustration and may therefore be responsible for its iconographic implications that Dante's text ultimately comes from God. But Buffalmacco has augmented this theme by means other than the sheer content of the miniatures. For example, through subtleties of pose and expression, Buffalmacco suggests that the king and his guests are awestruck as they gaze towards the hand. That is to say, Belshazzar leans forward with an evident intensity of interest in the writing on the wall and in the translation of it; the first figure to the right of the king leans back from those events as if somewhat shocked by them; and, as if thoroughly shocked by those events, the second figure to the right of Belshazzar not only leans back but also throws his hands up in the air. Moreover, Buffalmacco expands on the surrealism of the event by painting the ceiling a rich, unnatural shade of purple and the floor a no-less-artificial green. And he portrays the disembodied hand in such a position as to invoke his author-portrait of Dante as a "pen of God," for, in being posed at the upper left corner of the surface on which it is evidently about to write, or has only just begun to write, the index finger of that hand echoes the poet's quill. That is to say, it joins the figure of Dante in recalling

earlier Evangelical portraits, in suggesting that it is about to make the Word flesh.

And, indeed, in accord with those Evangelical author-portraits, with the equation of the *Inferno* to Scripture, Buffalmacco emphatically distances Dante's text from all readers other than Guido. Though the disembodied hand is poised to make the Word flesh, it apparently has not yet begun to do so, or, if it has done so, it has not done so permanently, for, as mentioned earlier, the words do not appear on the wall. Nor does the wall feature dashes, dots, or other textual surrogates that invite the viewer to project meaning onto them. And, in fact, the awe suggested by the gestures and expressions of the king and his guests imply that, prior to hearing Daniel's translation of the inscription, those figures did not have any idea of its true meaning. Moreover, the armored servants at left still do not seem to fully understand the damning inscription, for, despite its alarming claim that Belshazzar has been found "wanting" and his kingdom is "finished," the soldier on the left stands with one leg casually stretched towards the viewer, while the soldier on the right has his sword informally slung over his shoulder and joins his companion in a facial expression seemingly devoid of emotion. Indeed, the soldiers' evident lack of comprehension, as well as that of Belshazzar and the other seated characters, is compositionally echoed in the figural arrangement of the scene, for the king and all of his companions are almost completely confined to the left side of the image, to positions as far from the writing as possible while maintaining a visual distinction among the figures. That is to say, Buffalmacco has deployed many of his pictorial devices and details in such a manner as to suggest Guido's readers are far from understanding Dante's text on their own.

The distancing of the king and his companions from the writing on the wall may to some degree be further underscored by the intervention of Daniel's figure, for as he stands midway between the disembodied hand and the table, he stretches almost from floor to ceiling. Yet, though the prophet may partially screen the other figures from the inscription, he also serves as a bridge from it to them. As he points to the right with his right hand, he not only directs the viewer's attention towards the wall and indicates the focus of his own interpretative efforts but also echoes the disembodied hand. He establishes a pictorial parallel that spans the gap between himself and the wall and suggests a unity with the hand, an echo of its motion and perhaps an understanding of the meaning in its message.



The flow of that meaning may then be seen as traveling down Daniel's right arm and directly out his open mouth towards the left side of the image, or perhaps as lingering in the prophet's figure and spiraling up his extremely twisted neck. But, in either case, the composition suggests that the meaning of the mural message ultimately passes via Daniel to Belshazzar, for the king, too, points to his right with his right hand and echoes the index finger of the disembodied hand. That is to say, he displaces Daniel as the terminus of the right-to-left flow of meaning from the writing on the wall and redefines the prophet as in fact an intermediary for the conveyance of that message, as a pictorial parallel to Guido in relationship to the *Commedia*.

Of course, as a corollary to that analogy, Guido's readers are invited to identify with Daniel's audience. And, indeed, as Guido's only named reader and probable patron, Lucano Spinola may have felt a particularly close (and presumably uncomfortable) kinship with Daniel's patron, Belshazzar. But in purely pictorial terms, Lucano and the rest of Buffalmacco's viewers are encouraged to identify more with the second seated figure to the right of the king than with anyone else in the image. Though Belshazzar's other seated companion and Daniel also turn the front of their bodies somewhat towards the viewer, they are not as exposed as is the second seated figure, for the first seated figure crosses his arms on the table and, judging from the shadows along the right side of his body, turns more towards the disembodied hand than does the other guest, and Daniel closes his own form by reaching across his body with his right arm as he points towards the disembodied hand. Thus, as the second seated figure to the right of Belshazzar throws back his hands and thrusts his chest forward, he is more corporeally, and perhaps psychologically, open to the viewer than are the other figures.

Empathy with the second seated guest is perhaps further fostered by his pictorial centrality to the image and the concomitant invitation to focus attention on him. As is underscored by the near equidistance of the windows that flank him, of windows that appear to be evenly spaced across the back wall, he is seated almost exactly midway between the left and right sides of the room. Indeed, he is so central to his setting that all but the most peripheral of the ceiling beams seem to converge on his location. Moreover, they are joined by a primary orthogonal of the folio itself, for the gap between the columns of text underneath the image also seems to lead towards him. That is to say, he is polyvalently defined as the center

of the illustration and concomitantly as perhaps the ideal focus for the viewer's attention, as an invitation to identify with him above all other figures in the image and perhaps to likewise throw back one's hands in the face of Guido's interpretation.

The analogy between Guido and Daniel, particularly in terms of agency and righteousness, is underscored by the portrait of Guido in a historiated initial just below the illustration of Belshazzar's Feast. Behind the coils of the "S" inaugurating Fra Guido's preface, a plump and tondured figure with a needle nose and full cheeks hunches over a desk that slopes away from the viewer and reveals only the upper edge of an open codex (Fig. 3). The figure does not seem to be taking dictation, for, unlike Dante in the author-portrait on the recto of folio 1, he neither gazes up at another figure nor applies his pen to the upper left corner of overtly blank folios. Indeed, he seems to be taking an active interest in the codex in front of him, for, though he turns far more toward the viewer than does Dante, he gazes intensely at the open manuscript on his desk, and, as if preparing to begin or resume writing therein, he sharpens his quill. Moreover, his open mouth suggests that he is in fact either formulating a passage or, in accord with medieval custom, reading a passage aloud as he reflects upon its meaning.<sup>46</sup> That is to say, he seems to be utterly absorbed by the creation of his *Expositiones* and to join Daniel as a *commentator*, as an interpreter who has the authority yet independence to rightfully remark on a sacred text.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, much of Guido's independence is tied to the implication that, like Daniel in comparison with the disembodied hand, Guido is lower in divine rank than Dante, that Guido is, in fact, charged with interpreting the Word for mortals rather than recording it directly from God or from an immediate agent for Him. And, in accord with that hierarchical relationship, Guido is depicted in the historiated "S" as somewhat more accessible than is Dante in the latter's author-portrait on folio one. That is to say, the commentator is turned far more towards the viewer than is the *auctor*, and Guido is absorbed by the material in front of him rather than by a half-length figure appearing above him.

Yet, perhaps to balance that greater accessibility and to underscore Guido's authority, he is at the same time more emphatically distanced from the viewer than is the figure of Dante on folio one, for Guido appears not only to be absorbed by his work to the exclusion of all other considerations but also to be seen from a far lower vantage point than Dante. While

the latter's desktop seems to drop rather steeply towards the foreground, Guido's desktop is seen from such a low vantage point that it hides all but the upper edge of the codex towards which he gazes. And while the legs of Dante's lectern suggest the ground in his scene drops as steeply towards the bottom of the image as does his desktop, the legs of Guido's lectern and the sides of the platform on which it rests suggest the platform is seen from a far more horizontal viewpoint than is the ground in Dante's image. Moreover, the fact that Guido stares almost directly towards the viewer as he looks down at the manuscript in front of him suggests he would gaze over the viewer's head if he were to look up, that the viewer is seeing him from a far lower vantage point than is suggested by the somewhat aerial viewpoint of Dante. Thus, in accord with the pre-modern definition of a *commentator*, of a scholar who may not have the power to alter a divine text but has great license to interpret it, Guido is positioned somewhat higher than, and concomitantly ranked above, his audience.

That distance between interpreter and reader/viewer, moreover, is polyvalently reinforced by the format of the image, for, especially in the context of this manuscript, the rectangle around Guido emphatically distinguishes him from everything outside of the image, including the reader/viewer. Even if the frame is treated in accord with Jacques Derrida's discussion of the *parergon* as at least in part an arbiter between the world inside of it and the world outside of it, the mere introduction of that mediation simultaneously introduces the distinction between those worlds and literally as well as figuratively foregrounds the lacuna between Guido and the viewer.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, in that capacity, the frame may invoke the articulation of Daniel's privileged status in the image of Belshazzar's feast, that is, the elevation of the prophet above the king, above his companions, and above the viewer, for the image of Daniel interpreting the writing on the wall is one of only seven images, out of the 64 in the Musée Condé manuscript, that are framed. The border in this instance is formed by the cross-section of the walls, ceiling, and floor of Belshazzar's dining room, but it is no less effective than the traditional frame around Guido in partitioning its contents from the world outside of it. And, particularly in the light of its proximity to the historiated initial of Guido and given the scarcity of other framed images in this manuscript, it, and perhaps the hierarchical distinctions of the scene it surrounds, are invoked by the borders around the portrait of the commentator.

Further resistance to viewer identification with Guido is established by the intervention of the historiated initial itself, by the “S” that dramatically sweeps in front of Guido. Though the selective tapering and swelling of the letter facilitate the viewing of Guido’s form, that is to say, though the “S” crosses the image just beneath the desktop and thins to a relatively slender nodule at that point, it does not cease to illusionistically eclipse the scene behind it, and it emphatically swells as it curves out from its center to the flanks of the image. It leaves little doubt that the viewer is gazing at an image, at a representation that, as a pictorial metaphor for that which it represents, for Guido himself, establishes an artistic parallel to his distance as a *commentator* from the viewer. In harmony with the illustration of Belshazzar’s Feast, Guido is presented as sufficiently human to render the Word accessible to his fellow mortals, yet divinely privileged enough to be one of Its authoritative interpreters.

Buffalmacco’s prefatory images thus accord with Guido’s text in presenting the *Commedia* as a record of a divine experience and in concomitantly suggesting that, like holy scripture, Dante’s text is so sacred and so allegorically complex that it can only be understood through the lens of a skilled and devoted interpreter. But the manner in which the audience is to experience the text directly or via Guido’s interpretation is not fully addressed until the early images of the pictorial narrative beneath Guido’s *Expositiones*. After several lateral views of the Pilgrim encountering the three beasts, as well as meeting Virgil and the Heavenly Ladies, Buffalmacco switches at the gate of Hell from a third-person point of view to a first-person point of view (Fig. 4).<sup>49</sup> He exploits the form and function of the portal to invite identification with the Pilgrim and to thereby promote the immediacy and relevance of the *Commedia*.

Except when the Pilgrim reverses course 180 degrees to flee from the three beasts, he and Virgil proceed from left to right up to and through the gate. In a play upon Western reading habits, they invite perception of themselves as advancing, as progressing from one episode to the next. Indeed, they may seem to accelerate as they enter the gate, for the long ground line beneath the otherwise empty bas-de-page to their left encourages the eye to speed across the folio towards the boldly striding figure of Virgil and the stumbling figure of Dante. But these profile or near-profile figures do not particularly invite the viewer to identify with them, for they do not look towards the viewer and thereby establish an ocular dialogue with him or her, nor substantially turn towards the viewer

and thereby establish a meaningful corporeal dialogue with him or her, nor turn away from the viewer and thereby suggest a shared point of view. Instead, they seem to be completely oblivious to the viewer and to concentrate on that which lies directly in front of them, or in the case of Dante fleeing the three beasts, behind them.

The gate of Hell, however, overtly acknowledges the viewer. Though Virgil seems to be crossing its threshold in profile—and, judging from the facts that his left eye is visible and his right leg seems to be striding towards the viewer, may even be moving somewhat towards the foreground—the gate does not open to the left, much less towards the rear of the image. Instead, it opens towards the viewer. In fact, it opens somewhat to his or her right and emphatically away from Virgil and the Pilgrim. As those figures approach from the left, the crenellations at the top of the tower suggest that, even in profile, Virgil and the Pilgrim would enter the gate only about sixty degrees from the left jamb. That is to say, if the crenellations are presumed to be of fairly standard thickness for bricks or blocks in Trecento architecture, they define Virgil and the Pilgrim as entering the gate from a rather oblique angle to the left. But the portal itself suggests the figures will have to veer to their left, and perhaps even turn back, to enter Hell, for the visibility of the right jamb's inside face in relationship to the arch above it defines the portal as opening approximately thirty degrees to the right of the viewer's line of sight. That is to say, he or she is not only more directly addressed by the gate but is in fact given roughly the same view of it as the figures should have.

Though the viewer may thereby identify with Virgil, the figure of Dante in some ways issues a stronger invitation for empathy. As the Pilgrim looks up towards the two bats that hover on either side of the portal, towards the three owls that perch on top of the tower, and towards the inscription "IUSTITIA" just beneath the crenellations, he falls forward onto the balls of his feet, as if yanked by Virgil. That is to say, the Pilgrim seems to suffer from a hesitation with which, particularly under these circumstances, many Trecento viewers may have thoroughly identified, for bats were often seen as terrestrial counterparts of demons, owls were often treated as symbols of the Devil, and IUSTITIA rather concisely summarizes the main theme of the menacing inscription above the gate in Dante's text.

Indeed, the contents of the inscription as highlighted by the image invoke a passage in the adjacent column of text, a passage in which Guido

underscores the righteousness of Hell and its horrors.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, the form of the inscription in the image reinforces that allusion, for the letters depart from the perspective of both the gate and four of the five crenellations. Lacking indications of shading or depth, they join the brick body of the tower, particularly the crenellation farthest to the right, in clinging to the surface of the folio and concomitantly addressing the audience as directly as do the content and form of Guido's commentary in the adjacent column of text. That is to say, they invite the viewer to look to Guido's *Expositiones* for a fuller explanation of their own brief message, and they rather pithily promote the gist of that explanation (and, indeed, of Guido's commentary as a whole): the insistence that Dante's hell is a largely orthodox and accurate portrayal of divine justice.

Of course, like the departure of the portal and of four of the crenellations from the viewpoint assumed by the body of the tower and by the farthest right of the crenellations, the departure of the letters from the viewpoint assumed by the portal and by the four crenellations may be nothing more than an error, for one-point perspective had not yet been fully realized in Western art and artists are, in any case, fallible.<sup>51</sup> But all of the other 64 doors and windows in the Musée Condé illustration cycle, as well as most of Buffalmacco's other architectural indications of perspective in this manuscript, are rendered from the same point of view as the rest of their setting. And, with perhaps the exception of the gate to Dis, none of the other doors and windows are as narratively important or visually prominent as is the gate of Hell. Moreover, manipulation of perspective to foster viewpoints that have thematic implications can be found in numerous other works from the first half of the Trecento.<sup>52</sup> Thus, it seems well within the capability of an artist as highly esteemed by his contemporaries as was Buffalmacco to convey important issues by means of manipulating the perspective of the gate to Hell, and it seems highly unlikely that he would commit his sole perspectival error at this crucial narrative juncture.

Indeed, in the very next image of the manuscript, he reinforces the conflation of the viewer with the Pilgrim at the gate. As the viewer turns folio 48, he or she encounters the Cowardly Undecided in the bas-de-page on the recto of folio 49 (Fig. 5). These tormented souls race from left to right chasing a strigian emblem on a banner that they will never catch and fleeing a swarm of stinging insects. But unlike most of the figures in the preceding Musée Condé illustrations, not all of the cowards

are portrayed from a third-person point of view, for rather than appearing in profile or near-profile staring straight ahead, the seventh figure from the left turns his head and his gaze towards the viewer, while the fourth figure from the left turns not only his head and gaze towards the viewer but also most of his torso and limbs. That is to say, both of these figures seem to acknowledge the viewer's presence with corporeal and ocular dialogues that welcome him or her to the narrative. Moreover, the absence of the figures that had hitherto represented Virgil and the Pilgrim invites the viewer to enter the underworld as one or both of the protagonists, to imagine that he or she has slipped across the threshold in their shoes and is now witnessing in person the realization of the bats as demons, the conversion of the owls to an emblem of the Devil, and a demonstration of the justice promised by the inscription on the gate.

In later episodes of the pictorial cycle, Buffalmacco sometimes further fosters this first-person identification with the Pilgrim. In the illustration of Dante and Virgil crossing the Styx, for example, several of the other souls in the boat look towards the viewer, as do the infants in Limbo, Phlegyas, and a demon escorting the barrators in the illustration of *Inferno* 21.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, the illustrations of the infants and of Phlegyas once again omit the figure of Dante and thereby further encourage the viewer to identify with the Pilgrim and perhaps to meld his or her standard third-person perception of lateral compositions with a more intimate, first-person perspective. But early Trecento conventions for illustrations resist a sustained first-person perspective of a pictorial narrative, and rarely did Buffalmacco have as strong a textual model for such a viewpoint as he had at the beginning of the third canto.

Prior to that point in the *Inferno*, Dante encourages the reader to imagine that he or she is merely accompanying the narrator. For example, by employing the first-person plural possessive in the very first line of Canto 1, "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita," he groups the reader's perspective with his own. And, as if the reader were a spectator in the text, the narrator says shortly thereafter, "ecco . . . una lonza leggiera e presta molto" (*Inf.* 1.31–32). But, as the third canto opens with the inscription over the gate of Hell, the reader is encouraged to believe that, rather than merely accompanying the Pilgrim, he or she has become the Pilgrim, for the reader is positioned so as to join the protagonist in seeing that inscription first-hand.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the reader may not initially realize that he or she is, in fact, reading the very same words as does the Pilgrim. Though

some readers may guess from the lines themselves that the Pilgrim is their primary audience within the *Commedia*, and though the narrator definitively interrupts the reader's identification with the Pilgrim by declaring after the inscription "Queste parole . . . / vid'io scritte al sommo d'una porta" (*Inf.* 3.10–11), the reader has no warning, as he or she begins to read the inscription, that it is a text within the narrative. The author does not provide an introduction to the inscription, and, unlike modern publishers, the Musée Condé scribe and most of his contemporaries do not distinguish the inscription with capital letters, quotation marks, or other such signifiers. The reader is therefore invited to read the inscription as if it were addressed primarily to him or her, and, until the reader learns otherwise, he or she may not only read the same words that the Pilgrim does but also read them as the Pilgrim. He or she may be led to assume that the reader him- or herself is the one who will have to abandon every hope upon entering Hell.

Buffalmacco thus translates an extraordinarily sophisticated literary device into pictorial terms that closely capture not only its sly attempt to engage the viewer but also at least some relevance of that engagement to this particular juncture in Dante's narrative and to the overall spirit of Guido's response to the *Commedia*. Moreover, Buffalmacco does so as just one link in a chain of illustrations that define not only how Dante's audience should approach the *Commedia* but also the nature of that text, its sources, and an intermediary who could facilitate the prescribed approach to Dante's text. That is to say, Buffalmacco treats the *Commedia* as a figural allegory for a divine vision and joins Guido in calling for the audience to experience it as completely as possible via the commentator's interpretation of it, to fully appreciate the importance of a narrative that he and Guido present as a true and faithful view of the afterlife, as a text of the utmost relevance for the viewer—and us.

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## NOTES

1. A shorter version of this paper was delivered May 5, 2000 at the Thirty-Fifth International Congress on Medieval Studies, where it profited greatly from comments by the audience. For reading earlier versions of this paper, I would also like to thank Teodolinda Barolini, Joan Ferrante, Tobias



Gittes, Manuele Gragnolati, David Rosand, Jane Rosenthal, and the editors of *Dante Studies*, especially Christopher Kleinhenz and Steven Botterill. Any remaining faults are, of course, mine alone.

2. For Pellegrini's remark, see "Dante's Illuminators Revisited," *Dante Studies*, 88 (1970), 167. The full citation of his subject is *Illuminated Manuscripts of the "Divine Comedy,"* ed. Peter Brieger, Millard Meiss, and Charles Singleton, 2 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969).

3. See Barolini, "Minos's Tail: The Labor of Devising Hell (*Inferno* 5.1–24)," *The Romanic Review*, 87 (1996), esp. 448; and Kleinhenz, "Dante and the Tradition of Visual Arts in the Middle Ages," *Thought*, 65 (1990), 17–26.

4. For a thorough introduction to the varieties and roles of advisors in relationship to illuminators, as well as for an authoritative discussion of the forms in which the advisors' recommendations survive, see Jonathan J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London: Yale University Press, 1992), esp. 52–72.

5. For illustrations of some of the labeled images in the Budapest *Commedia*, see *Illuminated Manuscripts . . .*, II, figs. 68b, 79b, 150b, 317a, and 377a. Unless otherwise noted, I have derived my attributions of the miniatures from the catalogue by Peter Brieger and Millard Meiss in *Illuminated Manuscripts . . .*, I, 209–339. For a catalogue of almost all known *Commedia* manuscripts and for updated references to their shelf numbers and bibliography, see Marcella Roddewig, *Dante Alighieri. Die göttliche Komödie: Vergleichende Bestandsaufnahme der Commedia-Handschriften* (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 1984).

6. For perhaps the most detailed discussion of such independent programs for miniatures, see Alexander, 57–60.

7. Six of these letters are mentioned by Francesco Paolo Luiso in "Di un'opera inedita di frate Guido da Pisa," in *Miscellanea di studi critici in onore di Guido Mazzoni*, 2 vols. (Florence: Galileiana, 1907), I, 89. Millard Meiss notes two more in "The Smiling Pages," in *Illuminated Manuscripts . . .*, I, 46, n. 49. Note that this essay by Meiss largely incorporates his earlier article "An Illuminated *Inferno* and Trecento Painting in Pisa," *Art Bulletin*, 47 (1965), 21–34. Also note that the dating of the Musée Condé manuscript is in dispute. Apparently on the basis of Francesco Mazzoni's "Guido da Pisa interprete di Dante e la sua fortuna presso il Boccaccio," *Studi Danteschi*, 35 (1958), 29–128, Meiss dated the miniatures and the manuscript to approximately 1345, a dating defended by Mazzoni's entry on Guido da Pisa for the *Enciclopedia dantesca* (ed. Umberto Bosco, 6 vols. [Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970–1978]), and adopted by many other scholars, such as Alexander, Judith Blezzard, and Stephen Ryle in "New Perspectives on the Feast of the Crown of Thorns," *Journal of the Plainsong & Mediaeval Music Society*, 10 (1987), 24, 31. However, Bruno Sandkühler convincingly argues for a date no later than 1333 and probably between 1325 and 1328 in *Die frühen Dante-kommentare und ihr Verhältnis zur mittelalterlichen Kommentartradition*, Münchner Romanistische Arbeiten, XIX (Munich: W. Fink, 1967), esp. 163; L. Jenaro-MacLennan builds a strong case for a date of approximately 1327–28 in "The Dating of Guido da Pisa's Commentary on the *Inferno*," *Italian Studies*, 23 (1968), 19–54, and again in *The Trecento Commentaries on the "Divina Commedia" and the Epistle to Cangrande* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Enzo Orvieto insists the manuscript must have been finished by 1328 in "Guido da Pisa e il commento inedito all'*Inferno* dantesco. Le chiose al trentatreesimo canto," *Italica*, 46 (1969), 17–32. For a recent update of the controversy regarding the dating of Guido's commentary, particularly in relationship to other early responses to the *Commedia*, see Steven Botterill's chapter, "The Trecento commentaries on Dante's *Commedia*," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume II, The Middle Ages*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 590–611.

8. For a discussion of fourteenth-century education, particularly in relationship to artists, see Paul F. Grendler, "Schooling in Western Europe," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990), 775–787. His claim that fourteenth-century painters "would normally know no Latin" (786) reinforces the likelihood that Buffalmacco and his assistants would not have been able to read Guido's Latin commentary.

9. For *Commedia* copies completed by 1327, see Roddewig. Though the dating of many *Commedia* commentaries is controversial, the "Epistle to Can Grande," and the commentaries by Jacopo di Dante and Graziolo de' Bambaglioli, as well as that by the earliest of the authors grouped under the

title "Anonimo Latino," almost certainly predate 1327, as perhaps do the remarks by Jacopo della Lana. For more on the dating of all the major fourteenth-century commentaries on the *Commedia*, see Botterill. For more on Vernani and his condemnation of the *Commedia* in the course of damning the *Monarchia*, see Elisabetta Cavallari, *La fortuna di Dante nel trecento* (Florence: Perrella, 1921), 42–44; Michele Maccarrone, "Dante e i teologi del XIV–XV secolo," *Studi romani*, 5 (1957), 20–28; Sandkühler, 77–79; F. Forti, "Bologna: Tradizione manoscritta e commentatori," in the *Enciclopedia dantesca*, I, 666; A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100–c.1375: The Commentary-Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 445; and Colin Hardie, "Two Commentators on Dante, Old and New," *Medium Aevum*, 46 (1977), 264. Of course, by the mid-1340s the *Commedia* had circulated even more widely, as attested by the many additional copies, commentaries, and censures from the intervening period.

10. For this translation of Guido's commentary and for further discussion of Buffalmacco's pictorial reference to Guido's text, see Peter Brieger, "Pictorial Commentaries to the *Commedia*," in *Illuminated Manuscripts . . .*, I, 85. For the illustration of Plutus, see *Illuminated Manuscripts . . .*, II, fig. 104b.

11. For a more detailed discussion of the likelihood Guido advised the illuminators, see Meiss, "The Smiling Pages," esp. 38–39, 45–46, 55. For a detailed discussion of Guido's response to Dante's departures from the interests of the Church, see below.

12. For Lebègue's complete extant instructions for the author-portrait, see Jean Porcher's transcription in *Jean Lebègue: Les histoires que l'on peut raisonnablement faire sur les livres de Salluste* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1962). For the fullest treatment of Lebègue's entire program, see Porcher's monograph and Donald Byrne's "An Early French Humanist and Sallust: Jean Lebègue and the Iconographical Programme for the *Catiline* and *Jugurtha*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49 (1986), 41–65. For concise discussions of Lebègue recommendations, see Alexander, 57–59; and Sandra Hindman and J. D. Farquhar, *Pen to Press: Illustrated Manuscripts and Printed Books in the First Century of Printing* (College Park: University of Maryland Press, 1977), 82.

13. On the relationship of patrons to illuminators, see Alexander, esp. 52–53.

14. On the possibility of advisors recommending models, see Alexander, esp. 53.

15. For some of Boccaccio's many references to Buffalmacco, see the third and sixth tales of the eighth day and the third tale of the ninth day in the *Decameron*. Also see Vasari's "Life of Buffalmacco" in his *Lives of the Artists*.

16. Bellosi, *Buffalmacco e il "Trionfo della Morte"* (Turin: Simonelli, 1974).

17. Perhaps the most prominent parallels between, on the one hand, the Camposanto frescoes and, on the other hand, the Musée Condé miniatures are to be found in the facial features of many figures, the artist's tendency to underscore differences in emotion among figures yet to tightly integrate those figures in harmonious compositions, and the shared presence of checkered tiaras, spotted serpents, and other highly idiosyncratic details. For further discussion of these and other analogies between the two sets of works, see "The Smiling Pages," 59–61.

18. For more on Lucano, see F. Roediger, "Dichiarazione poetica dell'*Inferno* dantesco di Frate Guido da Pisa," *Propugnatore*, N.S., vol. 1, pt.1 (1888), 340; Luiso, 93, and n. 2; Charles Singleton, "The Irreducible Vision," in *Illuminated Manuscripts . . .*, I, 3–5, 6, 9; Meiss, "The Smiling Pages," 47, 53–55, 62; and Vincenzo Cioffari's introduction to his transcription of Guido's text, *Expositiones et Glose super Comediam Dantis*, ed. Vincenzo Cioffari (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), xvi–xvii. Note that Cioffari goes out of his way, especially on page xvi, to identify Lucano as the patron, though the four Spinola coats of arms in the margins and Guido's multiple references directly to Lucano have never left much doubt regarding the latter's support for the project.

19. For a fuller discussion of the likelihood that the Musée Condé manuscript is a presentation copy, see Meiss, "The Smiling Pages," 55.

20. For some of Guido's more intimate references to Lucano, see pages 5, 48, and 49 of his commentary as transcribed by Cioffari. For further discussion of Guido's reference to Lucano's travels as extensive ("multotiens perambulas semitas maris") and for further discussion of Guido's near reverence for Dante, see Cioffari's introduction to his transcription, xvi.

21. For two of the many fourteenth-century frescoes with such images of the prophets, see Andrea da Firenze's paintings on the vaults of the Spanish Chapel in Florence and Spinello Aretino's work at San Miniato al Monte.

22. For an illustration of the famous Godescalc *St. Matthew*, which appears on the first folio of Bibliothèque Nationale MS nouv. acq. lat. 1203, see Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (1986; rev. ed. London: Phaidon, 1994), pl. 37.

23. For a thorough discussion of the "inspired Evangelist" type and its lineage, see Carl Nordenfalk, "Die inspirierte Evangelist," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 36 (1983), 175–190.

24. Meiss, "The Smiling Pages," 53.

25. For a thorough discussion of the pre-modern term "*auctor*," see Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (1984; 2nd ed., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), esp. 190–210. See also Edwin A. Quain, "The Medieval *Accessus ad auctores*," *Traditio*, 3 (1945), 228–242; Marie-Dominique Chenu, *La Théologie au douzième siècle* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957), esp. 354–355; David Hult, *Self-fulfilling Prophecies: Readership and Authority in the First 'Roman de la Rose'* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), esp. 62; Deborah N. Losse, *Sampling the Book: Renaissance Prologues and the French 'Conteurs'* (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto, Associated University Presses, 1994), esp. 21; and Michael Camille, "The Dissenting Image: A Postcard from Matthew Paris," in *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. 131.

26. *Purgatorio* 12.133: "with the spread fingers of my right hand I found only six of the letters" ("con le dita de la destra scempie / trovai pur sei le lettere"). All quotations of the *Commedia* are from Petroschi's edition (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67). Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Commedia* are from Singleton's translation (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970–75).

27. For a brief survey of how Guido and all other *Commedia* illuminators treat Dante's agency, see my article "Historicizing the *Divine Comedy*: Renaissance Responses to a 'Medieval' Text," *The Year's Work in Medievalism*, 15 (2000), 83–106.

28. See Botterill's chapter, as cited above. For an older but more detailed study of the early commentators, see Sandkühler. For cursory overviews of Dante's status and authority in late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century commentaries, see Vittorio Rossi, *Scritti di critica letteraria*, 2 vols. (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1930), I, 293–332; D. Mattalia, "Dante Alighieri," in *I classici italiani nella storia della critica*, ed. Walter Binni, 3 vols. (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1954) I, 3–93; Siro A. Chimenz, *Dante (Letteratura italiana, I Maggiori)* (Milan: Carlo Marzorati, 1956), 70–103; and Paola Rigo, "Commenti danteschi," in *Dizionario critico della letteratura italiana*, ed. Vittore Branca, 4 vols. (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1986), 2:6–22. For a more recent, albeit less systematic discussion of all of the pre-modern commentaries, see Deborah Parker, *Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993). And, for a two-paragraph overview of the commentaries in the context of their parallels to *Commedia* miniatures, see Brieger, 88–90.

29. Cioffari's transcription, 1: "Ista manus est noster novus poeta Dantes," and "a manu manat donum, ita a Dante datur nobis istud altissimum opus" (translation Vincenzo Cioffari and Francesco Mazzoni, "The Prologue to the Commentary of Guido da Pisa," *Dante Studies*, 90 [1972], 126).

30. The full passage is from Cioffari's transcription, 2: "Liber istius manus est sua altissima media, que ideo scripta dicitur intus et foris, quia continet non solum licteram, sed etiam allegoriam" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 127).

31. Cioffari's transcription, 2: "idest sancti et angeli in gloria sublimati" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 128).

32. Cioffari's transcription, 2: "*Carmen* vero, quod idem est quod 'laus' et 'iubilatio', ad Paradisum refertur" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 128). For more on this echo of ecclesiastical phrasing, see Mazzoni, "Guido da Pisa . . .," 46.

33. Cioffari's transcription, 4: "potest ipse dicere verbum prophete dicentis: 'Deus dedit michi linguam eruditam'; et illud: 'Lingua mea calamus scribe velociter scribentis.' Ipse enim fuit calamus

Spiritus Sancti, cum quo calamo ipse Spiritus Sanctus velociter scripsit nobis et penas damnatorum et gloriam beatorum" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 132).

34. Cioffari's transcription, 4: "Spiritus Sanctus per istum aperte redarguit scelera prelatorum et regum et principum orbis terre" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 132).

35. Cioffari's transcription, 19: "quia Infernum, Purgatorium, celum, celique cives, ipsamve beatissima Trinitatem, sibi adhuc in carne viventi sunt videre concessa" (translation Cioffari, "Guido da Pisa's Basic Interpretation: A Translation of the First Two Cantos," *Dante Studies*, 93 [1975], 8).

36. Cioffari's transcription, 18: ". . . quia ipsa loca, ad que anime post mortem corporum vadunt, ymaginaria visione conspexit" (translation Cioffari, 7). For Guido's many references to the narrative as a vision, see the examples noted by Sandkühler (173), such as Guido's claim in Cioffari's transcription (19) that "In dimidio igitur nostre vite, idest in somno . . . fingit autor suas visiones vidisse," which has been translated by Cioffari (8) as, "in the middle of our life, that is in sleep . . . the author imagines that he saw his visions."

37. For a concise essay on Dante's relationship to some Church doctrine and authority, and for a short bibliography of recent fundamental readings on that topic, see Christopher Ryan, "The Theology of Dante," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 136–152.

38. Cioffari's transcription, 31: "Rogo te autem, o lector, ut autorem non iudices sive culpes, si tibi videatur quod ipse autor i aliquo loco vel passu contra catholicam fidem agat" (translation Cioffari, 13).

39. Cioffari's transcription, 30: "Si autem aliquid inepte dicerem, volens textum autoris exponere, ne aliquid remaneat inexcussum, ex nunc revoco et annullo, et Sancte Romane Ecclesie et eius officialium correctioni et ferule me submitto" (translation Cioffari, 13).

40. Cioffari's transcription, 3: "Nam de pena sive gloria ipsi homini attributa nobis narranda sive manifestanda intentio versatur autoris" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 129); Cioffari's transcription, 4: "Est autem principalis eius intentio removere viventes a statu miserie . . . [et] sic eos perducit ad gloriam" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 132). Mazzoni claims in "Guido da Pisa . . ." (48) that in the first two cantos of Guido's exegesis, the living sense of the narrator's concrete experience is replaced by an expression of the overall spiritual condition of the pilgrim and of his environment, as well as by an indication to others of the way to salvation.

41. For the passage encompassing both quotes, see Cioffari's transcription, 43: "Unde beatus Ysidorus, VIII libro Ethymologiarum ait: 'Officium poete in eo est ut ea, que vere gesta sunt in alias speties obliquis figurationibus cum decore aliquo conversa transducant. Iste itaque autor et invocatur Musas et narrat res gestas, et multa fabulosa pulcra et venusta compositione componit et fingit'" (translation Cioffari, 17). Drawing on the "Epistle to Can Grande," Guido also describes the form of the *Commedia* as "poetivus, fictivus, descriptivus, digressivus et transumptivus; et cum hoc diffinitivus, divisivus, probativus, improbativus et exemplorum positivus" (Cioffari's transcription, 5), which Cioffari and Mazzoni translate as "poetic, fictive, descriptive, digressive, and figurative; and further it is definitive, analytical, probative, refutative, and exemplary" (131). In the commentary to *Inferno* 23, Guido is particularly flattering when it comes to Dante's style: "iste poeta egregius, qui hanc *Comediam*, quam pre manibus nunc habemus, multo labore et sudore, ad utilitatem omnium viventium, sublimi stilo composuit" (Cioffari's transcription, 444), which I translate as, "this extraordinary poet, from whose hand we now have this *Commedia*, composed it in a sublime style with much labor and sweat for the benefit of all living persons."

42. Cioffari's transcription, 7: "Quod non debemus credere eos ibi esse, sed exemplariter intelligere quod, cum ipse tractat de aliquo vitio, ut melius illud vitium intelligamus, aliquem hominem, qui multum illo vitio plenus fuit, in exemplum adducit" (translation Cioffari and Mazzoni, 136). Regarding Virgil's appearance in *Inferno* 1, Guido notes that he is "tenet figuram et similitudinem rationis humane, qua mediante autor penas peccatis adaptat" (Cioffari's transcription, 30), which Cioffari translates as "a figure and type of human reason, through which the author fits the punishments to the sins" (13).

43. Cioffari's transcription, 22: "volens instruere hominem inter premissa contraria constitutum, exemplo sui poetice hic inducit" (translation Cioffari, 9).

44. For more abstract, fourteenth-century renderings of the three beasts, see, for example, the Budapest, Holkham, and Vatican 4776 miniatures of *Inferno* 1, as reproduced in figs. 40b, 42b, and 43a, respectively, of vol. 2 for *Illuminated Manuscripts*. . . .

45. For examples in *Commedia* miniatures of attributes that overtly privilege the metaphorical over the literal, see the sword and scales held by the figures of justice in Vatican 4776 (*Illuminated Manuscripts* . . . , II, fig. 9) and Biblioteca Laurenziana MS Tempiani 1 (*Illuminated Manuscripts* . . . , II, fig. 26).

46. Although Paul Saenger claims in "Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society," *Viator*, 13 (1982), 367–414, that there was a transformation to silent reading in the early fourteenth century, and though Suzanne Lewis insists in *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3, that books were apparently less likely to be read aloud by the second half of the thirteenth century, Mary Carruthers notes in *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 170–173, that both were practiced throughout the Middle Ages, and H. J. Chaytor observes in *From Script to Print: An Introduction to Medieval Literature* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1945), 5–21, that, while silent reading and copying of texts were ideals, few medieval readers would have been capable of understanding the text without in some way evoking the auditory correlative of the written word. For a discussion of graphic evidence that the spoken word was pre-eminent as late as the twelfth century, see Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History*, 8 (1985), 27.

47. For more on the pre-modern definition of a *commentator*, see Minnis, esp. 94–95.

48. On the dual nature of this or any other frame, see Derrida, "The *parergon*," *October*, 9 (Summer 1979), 3–41.

49. For the illustrations of the Pilgrim retreating to Virgil from the three beasts (fol. 34r) and meeting the Heavenly Ladies (fol. 45r), see *Illuminated Manuscripts* . . . , II, figs. 39 and 47b, respectively.

50. For the full text of Guido's comments, see Cioffari's transcription, 56. Note that just above the illustration of the gate, in the right-hand column of text, Guido deduces from the line "Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore" (*Inf.* 3.4) that divine justice was the reason why the infernal prison was made. And he proceeds to identify the rest of the inscription as little more than a frame for that theme: the first line, "Per me si va ne la città dolente," merely denotes the location of the gate; the fifth and sixth lines, "Fecemi la divina podestate, / la somma sapienza e 'l primo amore," establish that the gate was created by the Trinity; the seventh and eighth lines, "Dinanzi a me non fuor cose create / se non eterne, e io eterno duro," denote when the gate was created; and the final line, "Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch'intrate," confirms that there is no exit for those who sin, for those who merit punishment.

51. For a good introduction to the development of one-point perspective in Western art, see John White, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space* (1957; 3rd ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), esp. 23–102.

52. For example, in "The Vision of Peace: Meaning and Representation in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's 'Sala della pace' Cityscapes," *Art History*, 11 (1988), 492–510, Jack Greenstein has demonstrated that the perspective in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's fresco of good government, a work painted in approximately 1338–39 for the Sala dei Nove of the Sienese Palazzo Pubblico, is angled in such a way as to precisely privilege the viewpoint of Peace on an adjacent wall.

53. For the illustrations of Virgil and Dante crossing the Styx (fol. 50r), the infants in Limbo (fol. 51r), Phlegyas (fol. 76r), and the demon escorting the barrators (fol. 148v), see *Illuminated Manuscripts* . . . , II, figs. 55a, 67a, 116b, and 230b, respectively.

54. For further discussion of how the inscription conflates the reader with the pilgrim/narrator, see John Freccero, "Infernal Irony: The Gates of Hell," *MLN*, 99 (1984), 769–786.

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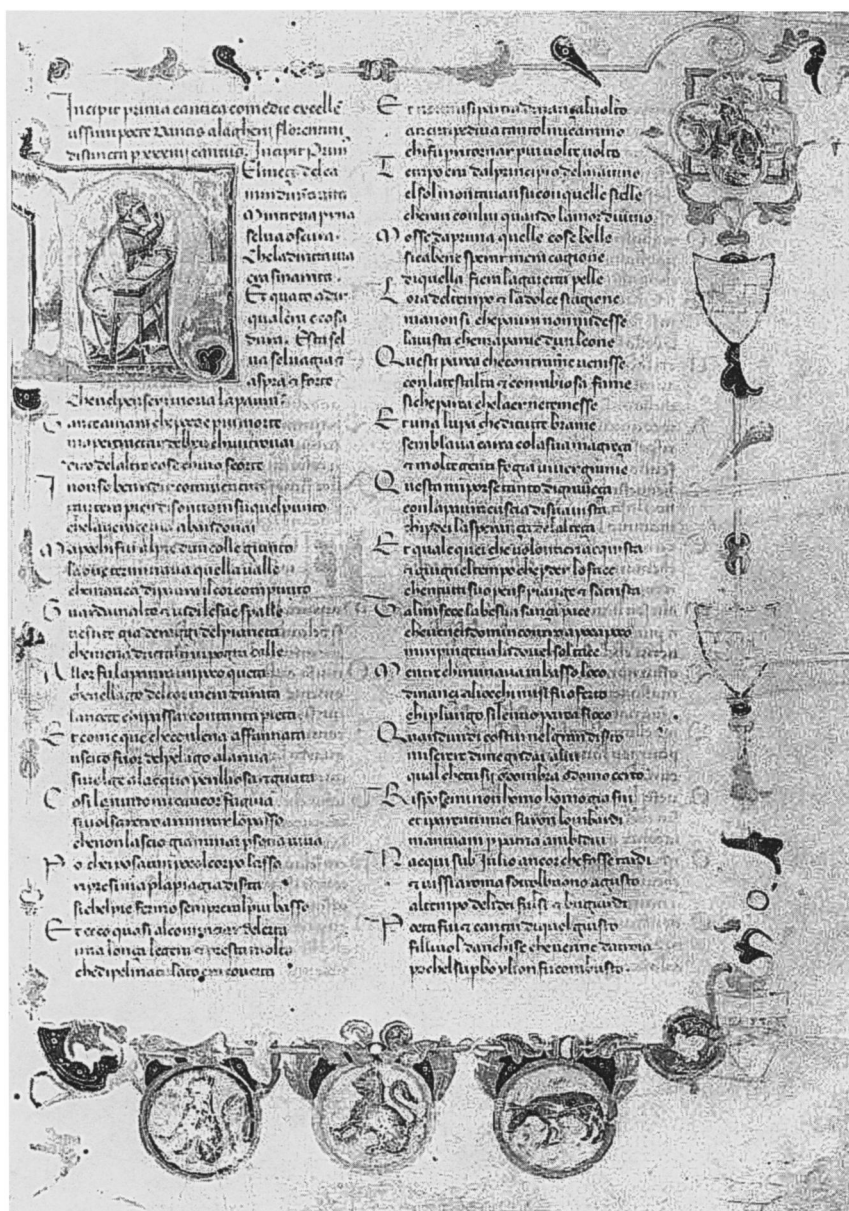
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**Figure 1**—Buonamico Buffalmacco and Assistants, Presentation Image, ca. 1327–28, Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 597, fol. 31r.



**Figure 2**—Buonamico Buffalmacco and Assistants, Dante, Virgil, and the Three Beasts, Opening Page of the *Inferno*, ca. 1327–28, Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 597, fol. 1.





**Figure 3**—Buonamico Buffalmacco and Assistants, Daniel Interpreting the Writing on the Wall and Guido da Pisa at His Desk, ca. 1327–28, Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 597, fol. 31r.

et id nec in inferno potest fuisse nec in celo.  
 Post hoc dum visus fluvium respicit videt  
 in ripa ipsius fluvii quatuor gentes quas con-  
 secundu ualde antra et de sideribus uide-  
 bat. Et dum ad fluvium appropinquasset  
 ecce quod fenerat una nauicula neminem  
 alta uoce clamabat: ue uobis o aie praeue.  
 Non speret unquam celum aspice. Ego ue-  
 nio ad ripam alteram uos portare in re-  
 nebras eternas ubi e calor et gelu. Et prae-  
 ter illa tabulae missae exprobrauit dicit  
 ad ducem. O tu quod ista caua uia recede  
 ab istis qui sunt mortui. Et postquam uidit quod  
 recedebat ait ad eum. Passas uias et per  
 alios portus ibi es ad ripam. Qui dicitur.  
 Cum saluandus sis. quia cum damnatio  
 uos descendere in infernum. Tunc ait ad

it ipsa beati criminatio quia ex merito pro-  
 uit inesse. Et distinguit hic trinitatem  
 personarum. Nam primo ponit personam patris  
 cui attribuit potentiam ad qua praeue cre-  
 are. ibi. fecerunt la diuina potestate. Et  
 personam filii cui attribuit sapia ad qua  
 praeue creati disponit et ordinare. ibi. La  
 somma sapia. Tertio persona spiritus sancti  
 cui attribuit clementia ad qua praeue creati  
 et dispositi gubernare. ibi. Ab humanore.  
 Quartum e quo quisque carcer fecit fuit. Et  
 dicitur quod fuit creatus in creaturae. ibi. Vi-  
 nam me non furem se creare. scilicet et me.  
 et anime nichil fuit. et deus qui e eternus. et  
 ego et post meam creationem in duro in er-  
 num. ubi nota quod eternum accipit hic per  
 pitio. quod eternum est illud quod carcer perpetua



**Figure 4**—Buonamico Buffalmacco and Assistants, Dante and Virgil Enter the Gate of Hell, *Inferno* III, ca. 1327–28, Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 597, fol. 48r.



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## Alberto Magno, Dante e le Pietre Preziose: Una nota su ambra ed alabastro

ELSA FILOSA

Quanto Dante debba all'opera di Alberto Magno è noto da tempo ed è stato più volte evidenziato da studiosi come Paget Toynbee, Natale Busetto, Giovanni Busnelli e Edward Moore.<sup>1</sup> Anche per quanto riguarda la conoscenza delle pietre preziose, il *De mineralibus* di Alberto Magno fu probabilmente per Dante un costante punto di riferimento. Questo trattato scolastico raccoglieva infatti, nel modo tipico dell'enciclopedismo medievale, tutto il sapere accumulato fino ad allora sui minerali, sui metalli e sulle pietre, preziose e non preziose. È naturale, pertanto, che Dante, parlando di eliotropia, smeraldi, rubini o balagi, perle o margherite, zaffiri, topazi, diamanti e cristalli, guardasse con attenzione al *De mineralibus*, come Vincenzo Cioffari dimostra accuratamente nel suo articolo del 1991, apparso su *Dante Studies*.<sup>2</sup>

Partendo proprio dalla conclusione di quest'articolo, si vorrebbe ora cercare di attuare un ampliamento dei dati ottenuti da Cioffari, a supporto della tesi da lui proposta. Dopo un'analisi dettagliata di tutte le pietre preziose presenti nella *Divina Commedia*, messe in stretto rapporto con il trattato sui minerali di Alberto Magno, Cioffari giunge infatti alla conclusione che il *De mineralibus* è il volume da cui Dante ha attinto la maggior parte delle sue conoscenze sulle pietre, con l'eccezione dell'ambra e l'alabastro:<sup>3</sup>

We believe that we have sufficient evidence to the effect that the *De Mineralibus* of Albertus Magnus furnished the bulk of Dante's knowledge of precious stones. [ . . . ] In this instance we find that of the ten different precious stones which Dante mentions, eight are completely and adequately described in the work of

Albertus, which also is the only important source that distinguishes between *bagius* and *rubinus*. The two stones which are missing (viz. *ambra* and *alabastro*) were very seldom included in any lapidary.

In effetti, sebbene l'ambra e l'alabastro siano raramente inclusi nei lapidari medievali, Alberto Magno li registra come lemmi nel *De mineralibus*, indicando tali pietre tuttavia con nomi differenti dai consueti. Si può supporre quindi, con ancora maggior certezza, che Dante avesse proprio questo trattato come principale, e forse unico, punto di riferimento nella conoscenza delle pietre preziose.

Per quanto riguarda l'ambra, il *De Mineralibus* presenta la pietra sotto la nomenclatura *Succinus* (i corsivi sono miei):<sup>4</sup>

SUETINUS [Succinus] lapis est crocei coloris, quem Graeci *eliciam*<sup>5</sup> vocant. Invenitur enim aliquando *translucens ut vitrum*. Vocabulum autem trahit a materia: quia succo vel gumma arboris nascitur, quae pinus vocatur: vulgariter autem *lubra* vocatur. Confricatus autem trahit folia, paleas, et fila, sicut magnes ferrum.<sup>6</sup>

Dalla descrizione dettagliata della pietra sembra inequivocabile che si tratti proprio dell'ambra. Si parla, infatti, di una pietra color del crocus, trasparente come il vetro, che si forma dalla resina del pino e soprattutto con la caratteristica e peculiare capacità dell'ambra, ovvero quella di attrarre a sé piccoli oggetti leggeri dopo essere stata sfregata. Nel contesto dantesco, tuttavia, particolarmente significativo risulta il riferimento alla sua trasparenza, descritta come simile a quella del vetro. Nella similitudine che Beatrice sviluppa per descrivere la velocità dell'attività divina, si legge:

E come in vetro, in ambra o in cristallo  
raggio risplende sì, che dal venire  
a l'esser tutto non è intervallo;  
Così 'l triforme effetto del suo sire  
nell'esser suo raggiò insieme tutto,  
senza distinzione in essordire.

(*Par.* 29.25–30)

In queste terzine, Beatrice paragona la velocità con cui la Trinità crea gli angeli alla minima frazione di tempo che intercorre tra un raggio di luce, che percuote un corpo trasparente, e il risplendere del medesimo raggio nella trasparenza di quel corpo. La scelta dei corpi “traslucanti” per attuare la similitudine cade sul vetro, sull'ambra e sul cristallo. Alla ricerca della fonte precisa da cui Dante possa aver attinto le informazioni sulla

trasparenza dei suddetti materiali, Vincenzo Cioffari propone Isidoro, dichiarando tuttavia molto difficile fare delle congetture su dove il poeta possa effettivamente aver ricavato le informazioni sull'ambra:<sup>7</sup>

In Isidore we find the source for the crystal:<sup>8</sup>

“Crystallus resplendens et aquosus colore.”

And for the glass:<sup>9</sup>

“Vitrum doctum quod visui perspicuitate transluceat [. . .] in vitro vero quilibet liquor vel species qualis est interius talis exterius declaratur, et quodammodo clausus patet.”

However, it is much more difficult to conjecture where Dante could have found his information about amber.

L'ambra infatti, secondo il particolareggiato studio di Cioffari, sembra essere presente quasi solo nominalmente, quindi senza descrizioni caratterizzanti, nelle seguenti opere: il *Tesoretto* di Brunetto Latini,<sup>10</sup> l'*Intelligenza*<sup>11</sup> e l'*Alphabetical Lapidary*.<sup>12</sup> Questi riferimenti in effetti non danno alcun indizio sulla trasparenza dell'ambra, e tanto meno attuano un paragone con il vetro, come invece fa Alberto Magno con le parole: “translucens ut vitrum.”<sup>13</sup>

Inoltre, anche per la presenza del cristallo nel verso dantesco sopra citato (*Par.* 29.25), si può fare riferimento, oltre che ad Isidoro di Siviglia come suggerisce Cioffari, ancora una volta al *De mineralibus*. Infatti, questo trattato, nel capitolo che discute i motivi dei diversi colori nelle pietre preziose intitolato “De his quae bene et male commixta sunt, et de causa diversitatis colorum in lapidibus pretiosis,” si sofferma anche sulla trasparenza, come caratteristica particolarmente spiccata nel cristallo:<sup>14</sup>

Dicamus igitur quod omnes lapides perspicui causantur ex multa materia aeris et aquae, quae terrestri apprehendente materia est congelata et congregata: et si illa quidem perspicuitas aeris vel aquae, tunc signum habet quod sola frigiditas excellens apprehendit materiam: et haec est sicut perspicuitas crystalli et berylli et adamantis et lapidis qui vocatur iris. Sed differentia habent in perspicuitate et natura aquea: quoniam crystallus non solum materiam aquae habere videtur, se aequitatem declinantem in aereitatem, propter quod maxime perspicuus est, et ad claritatem declinans.<sup>15</sup>

Nell'accostare ambra e cristallo al vetro, sembrerebbe estremamente probabile quindi che Dante avesse presente il *De Mineralibus* di Alberto Magno. Infatti, quest'ultimo è l'unico testo che parla, in modo esplicito e

chiaro, della trasparenza di tutte e due le pietre preziose, citate da Dante nel verso *Par.* 29.25 proprio in riferimento a tale qualità.

L'altra pietra che si prende in considerazione in quest'intervento, l'alabastro, appare nella *Commedia* con una sola occorrenza:

Tale dal corno che 'n destro si stende  
a piè di quella croce corse un astro  
de la costellazion che lì risplende;  
né si partì la gemma dal suo nastro,  
ma per la lista radial trascorse,  
che parve foco dietro ad alabastro.

(*Par.* 15.19–24)

Nel tentativo di individuare la fonte da cui Dante possa aver tratto delle informazioni sull'alabastro, Cioffari, non avendo trovato alcun riferimento utile nei lapidari medievali, indica come testo più probabile la *Naturalis historiae libri* di Plinio:<sup>16</sup>

The name is mentioned in the *Intelligenza*,<sup>17</sup> in Isidore,<sup>18</sup> and in the *Alphabetical Lapidary*,<sup>19</sup> but it is quite evident that these give no material. The only place where we find an important description of the stone is in Pliny:<sup>20</sup>

“In iisdem argenti metallis invenitur, ut propie dicamus, spumae lapis candidae nitentisque, non tamen translucentis, stimmi appellant alii stibium, alii alabastrum, alii larbason.”

It seems highly possible that Dante is referring to the extreme whiteness of the alabaster rather than to its transparent quality, and “dietro” in this sense means “in contrast with” as well as “behind,” as commentators would have it.

Anche in questo caso, Alberto Magno riporta l'alabastro, ma come sinonimo di *Nicomar*, dandone una descrizione piuttosto particolareggiata e certamente più dettagliata di quella di Plinio:<sup>21</sup>

NICOMAR idem est quod *alabastrum*, quod quidem est de genere marmorum: tamen quia virtus ejus est mirabilis, inter lapides pretiosos ponitur. Et expertum est de hoc, quod frigiditate sua conservat aromatica unguenta. Et ideo pyxides de hoc lapide fecerunt Antiqui. Conservat etiam frigiditate sua corpora mortuorum a foetore excellenti: et ideo monumenta et mausolea antiqua de hoc lapide inveniuntur: est autem albus nitens. Aiunt etiam quod victoriam dat et amicitiam conservat.<sup>22</sup>

Oltre a darne la definizione, Alberto Magno discute dell'alabastro anche nel primo libro del *De Mineralibus*, ove tratta dei colori delle pietre:<sup>23</sup>

In generibus autem marmorum album quod vocatur alabastrum, absque omni ambiguitate componitur ex multo perspicuo, quod est alteratum et passum vehementer a terrestri subtili: et sic resultat in eo color nobilissimus micans.<sup>24</sup>

In quest'ultimo passaggio Alberto suppone che l'alabastro, a causa del suo nitido colore, sia formato da materiale trasparente ("ex multo perspicuo").

La rappresentazione dell'alabastro nel *De mineralibus* sembra quindi non solo più precisa rispetto a quella di Plinio: essa sembra anche attagliarsi meglio al testo dantesco. Il colore e il materiale dell'alabastro infatti vengono discussi con accuratezza da Alberto Magno, il quale sottolinea il nitore di questo marmo e anche la sua chiarezza, derivante dai materiali da cui è composto. Questa specificazione permette una migliore interpretazione della metafora dell'anima beata (*Par.* 15.19–24), la quale è paragonata all'effetto del fuoco dietro all'alabastro. Questo, essendo traslucido, lascia passare il bagliore della luce, ma in una sorta di alone luminescente. Questa d'altronde è anche l'interpretazione comunemente accettata dai commentari danteschi, come risulta evidente da uno spoglio elettronico del *Dartmouth Dante Project*.<sup>25</sup> Per tale ragione si porrebbe in secondo piano l'interpretazione proposta da Cioffari (nella già riportata citazione) che si ispira alla definizione di alabastro di Plinio. Basandosi sulla *Naturalis historiae libri*, il critico infatti ipotizza che Dante si riferisca all'estremo biancore del pregiato marmo e non alla sua trasparenza, interpretando quindi il termine "dietro" nel significato di "in contrasto di," ovvero "che parve fuoco in contrasto del bianco dell'alabastro."

Certamente la creazione di questa finissima immagine, ovvero del fuoco che trascorre dietro il marmo diafano facendolo risplendere, potrebbe nascere da un'esperienza personale, come ipotizza il Porena, seguito da Bosco-Reggio.<sup>26</sup> Tuttavia sembra che, nella terzina *Par.* 15.21–24, ci sia una precisa volontà di richiamare alla mente del lettore la preziosità dell'incontro con Cacciaguida, nominando, tramite metafore e similitudini, le pietre e i marmi più pregiati. Così, l'anima beata è definita come una "gemma," che si muove dietro l'alabastro; più avanti nello stesso canto, il pellegrino si rivolgerà al suo avo definendolo come "topazio / che questa gioia preziosa ingemmi" (*Par.* 15.85–86), e delimitando in tal modo un preciso campo semantico.

Accostando le informazioni ricavate dall'articolo "Dante's Use of Lapidaries: A Source Study" e grazie ai dati raccolti in questa sede, si ritiene quindi opportuno indicare in Alberto Magno la fonte principale, e probabilmente unica, utilizzata da Dante per la trattazione delle pietre preziose. Tale precisazione non sembra essere esclusivamente erudita, ma può



risultare di significativa importanza nelle interpretazioni di numerosi passi danteschi. Non solo, come hanno rivelato molti studi sulle singole pietre preziose,<sup>27</sup> appare chiaro come Dante sia stato in grado di recuperare grandissima parte della cultura dei lapidari e di riproporla, ricontestualizzandola, in un discorso poetico, che fa riferimento ma va oltre i trattati scolastici. Solo tale analisi stratigrafica riesce a cogliere nella sua complessità, i significati nascosti e le intricate polisemie dense di allusioni, e pertanto anche il genio artistico dell'autore della *Commedia*.

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## NOTE

1. Cfr. Paget Toynbee, "Some Unacknowledged Obligations of Dante to Albertus Magnus," *Romania* 74 (1895), 38–55; Paget Toynbee, *Dante Studies and Researches* (London: Methuen, 1902); Natale Busetto, *Saggi di varia psicologia dantesca; contributo allo studio delle relazioni di Dante con Alberto Magno e con San Tommaso* (Prato: Passerini, 1905); Giovanni Busnelli, *L'origine dell'anima razionale; secondo Dante e Alberto Magno* (Rome: La Civiltà Cattolica, 1929); Edward Moore, *Studies in Dante* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

2. Cfr. Cioffari, Vincenzo, "Dante's Use of Lapidaries: A Source Study." *Dante Studies* 109 (1991), 149–64.

3. Cioffari, 159.

4. Per tutte le citazioni dal *De mineralibus* si fa riferimento a: Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia*, cura ac labore Augusti Borgnet (Parisii, apud Ludovicum Vivès, 1890, 38 voll.), vol. 5. Qui (*De Mineralibus*, II, tract. ii, cap. 17), Borgnet utilizza per l'ambra il lemma *suetinus*. In questa sede, tuttavia, accettando la proposta di Dorothy Wyckoff, avanzata nella sua traduzione del testo dal latino all'inglese *The Book of Minerals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) si preferisce ricorrere al lemma *succinus*. La Wyckoff nella sua traduzione non accetta il termine *Suetinus* e lo corregge in *Succinus*, adducendo le seguenti motivazioni: "The printed heading, *Seutinus*, is obviously an error, since the derivation from *succus*, Latin 'juice, sap', is given just below. This is amber, which was well known, but is described in some lapidaries as *licurius*. The Greek name was *electron*" (121).

5. Il verbo *elicio*, *-is*, *eliciui*, *elicitum*, *-ere*, ha anche il significato di 'attrarre' (dal greco *ελέκτρον*), che è una delle proprietà fondamentali dell'ambra. Per tali ragioni, in questo caso, si rifiuta la proposta della Wyckoff che, nella sua edizione, cambia *eliciam* in *electrum*. Si può ipotizzare infatti che Alberto Magno abbia cercato una traduzione letterale dal greco *ελέκτρον* al latino *elicia*, coniando un nuovo lemma tramite la sostantivizzazione del verbo.

6. "Succinus è una pietra di color del crocus, che i Greci chiamano *elletra*. In verità talvolta si trova trasparente come il vetro. Invece, il nome deriva dalla materia: poiché nasce dal succo o dalla resina dell'albero, che è chiamato pino. Poi è chiamata volgarmente *ambra*. Sfregata inoltre attrae le foglie, la paglia e i fili, così come il magnete attrae il ferro" (Le traduzioni dal latino all'italiano del *De mineralibus*, qui ed altrove, sono mie).

7. Cioffari, 157.

8. *Isidori Hispalensis Etymologiarum seu Originum Libri XX*, a c. di W. N. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957, 1962), XVI.xiii.1.

9. Op. cit. XVI.xvi.1.

10. *Il Tesoretto e il Favoletto*, ed. Zannoni (1824), mdcxlii, 22:

Là dove sono tante  
Gemme dig ran vertute,  
E di molta salute,  
E sono in quello giro  
Balsamo, e ambra, e tiro [ . . . ]

11. *Intelligenza*, a cura di Gellrich (Breslau, 1883), 63:

In quinto loco è da verno la zambra  
Ove foco si fa par di fina ambra.

12. *Alphabetical Lapidary*, xxvii, in Studer & Evans, *Anglo-Norman Lapidaries* (Paris: Champion, 1924), 224:

Cymbra est d'une pere num [ . . . ]  
Blanche est e seche ceste pere.

13. *De Mineralibus*, Lib. II, tract. ii, cap. 17.

14. *De Mineralibus*, Lib. I, tract. ii, cap. 2.

15. “Diciamo quindi che tutte le pietre trasparenti sono generate da una grande quantità di aria e di acqua, che è congelata e congregata dalla terra con capacità unificanti; e dal momento che quella trasparenza è caratteristica dell'aria e dell'acqua, allora significa che un freddo estremo da solo ha compattato la materia: e questo è il caso della trasparenza del cristallo, del berillo, del diamante e della pietra che si chiama iris. Ma ci sono delle differenze nella trasparenza e nella natura dell'acqua: poiché il cristallo non solo sembra avere il materiale acqueo, ma sembra avere in se un'acquosità che si avvicina allo stato aereo, poiché è massimamente trasparente e quasi perfettamente chiaro.”

16. Cioffari, 155.

17. *Intelligenza*, ed. cit., 62:

E son di proferito i colonnelli  
E d'alabastro molto ricchi e belli.

18. “Alabastrum vas unguentarium e lapide sui generis cognominatum, quam alabastriten vocant [ . . . ]” (ed. Cit. XX vii 2).

19. Op. cit., vi, in Studer & Evans, 208:

Alabastre est une pere  
Si est de mult tendre manere.

20. Caii Plini Secundi, *Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, a cura di Carolus Mayhoff (Teubner, 1967–1972), XXXIII.1.

21. *De Mineralibus*, II, tract. ii, cap. 12.

22. “Nicomar è la stessa cosa dell'alabastro, che è un tipo di marmo: tuttavia, grazie alle sue meravigliose virtù, è posta tra le pietre preziose. È sperimentato che grazie alla sua freddezza conserva gli unguenti aromatici. Per questo gli Antichi fecero vasetti di questa pietra. Sempre grazie alla sua freddezza preserva i corpi dei morti da un estremo fetore: perciò si trovano antichi monumenti e mausolei fatti con questa pietra: è anche di un bianco brillante. Dicono anche che dia vittoria e conservi l'amicizia.”

23. *De Mineralibus*, I, tract. ii, cap. 3.

24. “Invece, tra i generi di marmo, il bianco, che è chiamato alabastro, è senza alcun dubbio composto da materiale molto trasparente, il quale è alterato ed ha duramente sopportato la parte più fine della terra: e così ne deriva il più nobile risplendente colore in esso.”

25. *Dartmouth Dante Project*. A cura di Robert Hollander. Dartmouth College, <http://dante.dartmouth.edu>. Già il Buti tra il 1385 e il 1395 scriveva: “L'alabastro è spezie di marmo bianchissimo e purissimo; e, posto dentro in uno vasello d'alabastro uno lume, riluce come una lanterna d'osso.” Ancora, in tempi più recenti Natalino Sapegno scrive: “foco dietro ad alabastro: fiamma che si muova dietro un alabastro trasparente, illuminandolo tutto e al tempo stesso vincendo con la sua luce più intensa quella luminosità diffusa.”

26. "Il Porena ricorda di aver visto in una chiesa di Toscana un sacrestano far scorrere, dietro ad un paliotto d'altare di alabastro, un lume per mostrarne la trasparenza: l'effetto, dice il critico, «ne è che si vede una luce più concentrata e forte scorrere in una più tenue luminosità diffusa» e aggiunge che Dante deve aver visto un fatto simile. Infatti a Ravenna, nel mausoleo di Galla Placidia, le finestrelle sono chiuse da lastre di alabastro; quelle esistenti sono moderne (1908), ma non si può escludere che in passato tali finestre non fossero di alabastro, come ora: avremmo in tal caso quasi la prova del fenomeno che aveva colpito il poeta." Probabilmente Dante aveva esperito la visione della fiamma della candela, dentro una lampada fatta di alabastro, anche a Volterra, che, a pochi chilometri da Firenze, è tutt'oggi uno dei centri più pregiati per la produzione e la lavorazione dell'alabastro.

27. Si vedano ad esempio gli studi di Valeria Bertolucci sulla perla e sullo smeraldo in *Morfologia del testo medievale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989); solo sullo smeraldo si veda Vincenzo Cioffari, "A Note on Dante—Smeraldo," *Speculum* 19 (1944), 360–63; sullo zaffiro, Caron Ann Cioffi, "'Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro': A Gloss on *Purgatorio* 1.13," *Modern Philology* 82 (1985), 355–64; sul cristallo, H.D. Austin, "Three Dante Notes. II. 'Crystal' in Dante Usage," *Italica* 13 (1936), 1–5. Sulle pietre in generale, A. Levavasseur, "Le pierres précieuses dans la 'Divine Comédie,'" *Revue des Études Italiennes* 4 (1957), 31–100; R.M. Durling and R.L. Martinez, *Time and the Crystal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Brenda D. Schildgen, "Wonder on the Border: Precious Stones in the *Comedy*," *Dante Studies* 113 (1995), 131–50.

# American Dante Bibliography for 2003

STEVEN BOTTERILL

**T**his bibliography is intended to include all publications on Dante (books, articles, translations, reviews) appearing in North America in 2003, as well as reviews from foreign sources of books published in the United States and Canada. The listing of reviews is necessarily selective, especially in the case of studies bearing only peripherally upon Dante. Items not recorded in the bibliographies for previous years are entered as addenda to the current list; items from 2003 not identified in time for inclusion in the list will be added in future issues of the journal. I extend my thanks to my research assistant, Ryan Maddox, and Richard Lansing for their invaluable help.

## *Books*

**Brittan, Simon.** *Poetry, Symbol, and Allegory*. Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2003.

Discusses Dante's use of allegory and symbolism, making particular use of the *Convivio* and the *canzone* on the death of Beatrice, and explores how these techniques provide guidance for the reader seeking to understand his poetry. This dual allegorical and literal meaning was new to readers of poetry in Dante's time, but, despite many of the poems being deeply wrapped in allegory, readers were and are still able to appreciate their lyricism.

**Cestaro, Gary P.** *Dante and the Grammar of the Nursing Body*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

Cestaro “investigat[es] the function of the nursing body in Dante,” drawing upon different forms of philosophical analysis, especially contemporary French, as well as psychoanalytical and feminist theory. Particular attention is paid to Julia Kristeva’s theory of semiotics in the wake of Lacanian psychoanalysis. The author is especially interested in the consequences for the interpretation of the notion of dependence on the female in Dante’s works, with its corollary that a male can never be considered such if he never loses his dependence on the female.

*Dante Alighieri*. Edited by Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. 300 p. (Bloom’s Modern Critical Views)

In the introduction to this collection of critical articles, some new and some reprinted, Bloom describes Dante’s standing in relation to other major poets. He also discusses how Dante’s place in the literary canon is affirmed by other poets, and how he is regarded in modern times as *the* Christian poet.

*Dante for the New Millennium*. Edited by Teodolinda Barolini and H. Wayne Storey. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003. 498 p. (Fordham Series in Medieval Studies, 2)

Collects a group of articles from the Dante2000 Conference held at Columbia University on April 7–9, 2000. In their introductory discussion (ix–xxiii), Barolini and Storey stress the need to explore new avenues of interpretation in Dante studies.

*Dante: The Critical Complex*. Edited with introductions by Richard Lansing. 8 vols. Routledge: New York & London, 2002. Volume titles: 1: *Dante and Beatrice: the Poet’s Life and the Invention of Poetry*. x, 426 p.; 2: *Dante and Classical Antiquity: the Epic Tradition*. xi, 416 p.; 3: *Dante and Philosophy: Nature, the Cosmos, and the Ethical Imperative*. xi, 380 p.; 4: *Dante and Theology: the Biblical Tradition and Christian Allegory*. viii, 424 p.; 5: *Dante and History: from Florence and Rome to the Heavenly Jerusalem*. xi, 420 p.; 6: *Dante and Critical Theory*. x, 432 p.; 7: *Dante and Interpretation*. xi, 414 p.; 8: *Dante’s Afterlife: the Influence and Reception of the Commedia*. xii, 418 p.

A compendium of previously published articles and essays by major Dante critics. The collection is organized by theme and covers the entire range of Dante’s literary works. The texts, representing the American and British critical heritage and dating from post World War II to the present,

appear in their original format. The editor provides a general introduction to the series as well as topical introductions for each set of articles.

**David, Nicolette.** *Love, Hate, and Literature: Kleinian Readings of Dante, Ponge, Rilke, and Sarraute*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003. 225 p. (Reshaping of Psychoanalysis)

Employing Klein's insights into infantile fantasy, the author focuses on Dante and three modern writers who, she argues, exemplify a Kleinian transformation of fantasies into literary texts. Particularly pertinent for a study of Dante are remarks showing how Klein's model helps the reader interpret Dante's fantasies of gratification and frustration through an examination of patterns of imagery.

**Mirsky, Mark Jay.** *Dante, Eros, & Kabbalah*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003. 234 p.

Discusses connections with Jewish mysticism in Dante's work (especially with the *Zohar* of Moses de Leon, whose ideas may have had some influence on Dante), and considers the possibility that Dante's relationship with Beatrice was not simply erotic but sexual in nature.

**Newman, Barbara.** *God and the Goddesses: Vision, Poetry and Belief in the Middle Ages*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. xiii, 446 p.

Referring briefly to Dante's conception of Beatrice as an earthly goddess, the author claims that the poet embraces a mystical rather than courtly concept of love, arguing that in the *Vita Nuova* and in *Paradiso* Beatrice incarnates and unites Amor and Caritas through her death.

**Pearl, Matthew.** *The Dante Club: A Novel*. New York: Random House, 2003. 400 p.

Pearl crafts a fictional murder mystery involving a group of Harvard professors in Cambridge circa 1865 several of whom would later become founding members of the Dante Society of America. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow works on his translation of the *Divine Comedy* for an American readership, the group is beset by a series of murders that appear to re-enact scenes from *Inferno*. Highly readable simply as a mystery, the book reveals a detailed and accurate understanding of Dante's work, his cultural presence in nineteenth-century Boston society, and the origins of the Dante Society.

Articles

**Addison, Catherine.** "Little Boxes: The Effects of the Stanza on Poetic Narrative." *Style* 37: 2 (2003), 124–143, 251.

Discusses the use and effects of the stanza in the discourse of narrative poetry, referring to Dante's text only for specific examples of the use of *terza rima*. Addison claims that the stanza creates a tension when used in epic works such as Dante's, which provides for the possibility of "forward extension," and argues that the specific effect of the use of Dante's stanza is equivalent to that of Milton's blank verse in *Paradise Lost*.

**Ahern, John.** "What did the First Copies of the "Comedy" Look Like?" In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 1–15.

Considers how Dante originally promoted and circulated his works, while examining the physical attributes of the early manuscripts and how they were received at the time of their copying.

**Ahern, John.** "Binding the Book: Hermeneutics and Manuscript Production in *Paradiso* 33." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 402–411.

Reprinted from *PMLA*, 97 (1982), 800–809.

**Ahern, John.** "The New Life of the Book: The Implied Reader of the *Vita nuova*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 157–172.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 110 (1992), 1–16.

**Alfie, Fabian.** "For Want of a Nail: The Guerri-Lanza-Cursiotti Argument regarding the *Tenzone*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 247–265.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 116 (1998), 141–159.

**Armour, Peter.** "The Theme of Exodus in the First Two Cantos of the *Purgatorio*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 223–263.

Reprinted from *Dante Soundings*, edited by David Nolan (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1981), pp. 59–99.

**Ascoli, Albert Russell.** "Dante after Dante." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 349–68.

Warns of the perils of reading Dante's works theoretically rather than historically, arguing that a simply theoretical reading of the *Commedia* will distort an understanding of the text's narrative.

**Ascoli, Albert Russell.** "‘Neminem ante nos’: Historicity and Authority in the *De vulgari eloquentia*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 46–91.

Reprinted from *Annali d’Italianistica*, 8 (1990), 186–211.

**Auerbach, Erich.** "Farinata and Cavalcante." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 33–62.

Reprinted from *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by W. Trask (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1957 [1946]), pp. 151–177.

**Auerbach, Erich.** "Figura." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 1–66.

Reprinted from *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), pp. 11–76.

**Balfour, Mark.** "‘Orribil furon li peccati miei’: Manfred’s Wounds in *Purgatorio* III." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 264–277.

Reprinted from *Italian Studies*, 48 (1993), 4–17.

**Barański, Zygmunt G.** "Scatology and Obscenity in Dante." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 259–73.

Undertakes to recontextualize a sometimes misunderstood aspect of Dante’s work. The author specifically calls into question established readings of *Inferno* 18, arguing that Dante is much more willing to employ scatological references than sexual ones, an attitude based on the apparently greater tolerance for scatology than sexual reference in the text of the Bible.

**Barański, Zygmunt G.** "Dante’s Biblical Linguistics." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 261–299. Reprinted from *Lectura Dantis*, 5 (1989), 105–143.

**Barański, Zygmunt.** "Comedia. Notes on Dante, the Epistle to Cangrande, and Medieval Comedy." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 194–223.

Reprinted from *Lectura Dantis*, 8 (1991), 26–55.

**Barański, Zygmunt.** "The ‘New Life’ of ‘Comedy’: The *Commedia* and the *Vita Nuova*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 279–307.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 113 (1995), 1–29.



**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Dante and the Lyric Past." In *Dante Alighieri (q.v.)*, 117–149.

Reprinted from *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, edited by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Beyond (Courtly) Dualism: Thinking about Gender in Dante's Lyrics." In *Dante for the New Millennium (q.v.)*, 65–89.

Traces the changes of Dante's *persona* from courtly to public poet through an examination of his treatment of women. Progresses far beyond the presentation of women in traditional courtly poetry as inactive individuals, Dante develops an image of woman who is more integrated with the world and its culture.

**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Autocitation and Autobiography." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 1: 217–254.

Reprinted from *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the "Comedy"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 3–39.

**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Dante and Francesca da Rimini: Realpolitik, Romance, Gender." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 7: 89–116.

Reprinted from *Speculum*, 75 (2000), 1–28.

**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Detheologizing Dante: Realism, Reception, and the Resources of Narrative." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 6: 79–102.

Reprinted from T. Barolini, *The Undivine Comedy: Detheologizing Dante*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 3–20.

**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Statius: 'Per te poeta fui.'" In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 7: 278–291.

Reprinted from *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the "Comedy"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 256–269.

**Barolini, Teodolinda.** "Vergil: 'Poeta fui.'" In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 2: 247–302.

Reprinted from *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the "Comedy"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 201–256.

**Bartoli, Lorenzo.** "Bruni e Boccaccio biografi di Dante: appunti filologici." *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America*: posted November 14, 2003, at [www.dantesociety.org](http://www.dantesociety.org) > Publications > Electronic Journal (EBDSA).

**Beaudin, Elizabeth A.S.** "Dante: Imagining Salvation." In *Dante Alighieri (q.v.)*, 49–72.

Argues that a considerable tension between realism and allegory is present in the *Commedia*, a phenomenon that further contributes to the work's power to draw the reader eye's "upward."

**Becker, Marvin.** "Dante and His Literary Contemporaries as Political Men." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 5: 227–242.

Reprinted from *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 665–680.

**Benfell, V. Stanley.** "Prophetic Madness: The Bible in *Inferno* XIX," In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 4: 323–341.

Reprinted from *Modern Language Notes*, 110 (1995), 145–63.

**Bisson, Lillian M.** "Brunetto Latini as a Failed Mentor." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 7: 133–147.

Reprinted from *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 18 (1992), 1–15.

**Boitani, Piero.** "Moby-Dante?" In *Dante for the New Millennium (q.v.)*, 435–50.

Outlines a relationship, in point of a shared concept of heroism, between Ahab, in Melville's *Moby Dick*, and Dante's Ulysses.

**Boli, Todd.** "Boccaccio's *Trattatello in laude di Dante*, Or *Dante Resartus*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 8: 1–24.

Reprinted from *Renaissance Quarterly*, 41, 3 (1988), 389–412.

**Bondanella, Peter E.** "Arnaut Daniel and Dante's *Rime Petrose*: A Re-Examination." In *Dante: The Critical Complex (q.v.)*, 1: 330–348.

Reprinted from *Studies in Philology*, 68 (1971), 416–434.

**Borges, Jorge Luis.** "Nine Dantesque Essays 1945–1951." In *Dante Alighieri (q.v.)*, 81–116.

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**Botterill, Steven.** "Mysticism and Meaning in Dante's *Paradiso*." In *Dante for the New Millennium (q.v.)*, 143–51.

Examines Dante's frequent exclusion from the traditional canon of mystical authors. The enduring meaning of *Paradiso*, if not its every word, should be considered mystical in nature.

**Botterill, Steven.** "Ideals of the Institutional Church in Dante and Bernard of Clairvaux." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 405–421.

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**Brand, C. P.** "Dante and the Middle Ages in Neo-Classical and Romantic Criticism." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 121–130.

Reprinted from *Modern Language Review*, 81 (1986), 327–336.

**Brownlee, Kevin.** "Literary Genealogy and the Problem of the Father: Christine de Pizan and Dante." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 25–47.

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**Brownlee, Kevin.** "The Practice of Cultural Authority: Italian Responses to French Cultural Dominance in *Il Tesoretto*, *Il Fiore*, and the *Commedia*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 412–423.

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**Cachey, Theodore.** "Between Hermeneutics and Poetics: Translation of the *Commedia*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 410–430.

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**Cambon, Glauco.** "Dante and the Drama of Language." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 23–46.

Reprinted from *The World of Dante: Six Studies in Language and Thought*, edited by S. Bernard Chandler and J. A. Molinaro (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1966), pp. 3–24.

**Cambon, Glauco.** "Dante's Presence in American Literature." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 167–190.

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**Carugati, Giuliana.** "Quando amor fa sentir de la sua pace." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 211–27.

Contends that Dante uses erotic and romantic language in Neoplatonic ways in order to present ideas that have long since been forgotten by the Church, concluding that when Dante thinks of God, he thinks of a woman.

**Cassell, Anthony K.** "Dante's Farinata and the Image of the Arca." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 197–232.

Reprinted from *Yale Italian Studies*, 1 (1977), 335–370.

**Cassell, Anthony, K.**, "The Tomb, the Tower and the Pit: Dante's Satan." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 201–221.

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**Cestaro, Gary P.** "Queering Nature, Queering Gender: Dante and Sodomy." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 90–103.

Departing from a consideration of the scholarly treatment of sodomy in *Inferno* 15–16, Cestaro argues for a more theoretically-informed understanding of the subject within the modern context.

**Chiarenza, Marguerite Mills.** "Boethian Themes in Dante's Reading of Virgil." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 79–89.

Reprinted from *Stanford Italian Review*, 3: 1 (1983), 25–35.

**Cioffi, Caron Ann.** "'Il cantor de' bucolici carmi': The Influence of Virgilian Pastoral and Dante's Earthly Paradise." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 387–413.

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**Cioffi, Caron.** "St. Augustine Revisited: On Conversion in the *Commedia*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 372–384.

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**Cogan, Marc.** "Delight, Punishment, and the Justice of God in the *Divina Commedia*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 117–142.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 111 (1993), 27–52.

**Colish, Marcia L.** “Medieval Allegory: A Historiographical Consideration.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 135–149.

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**Contini, Gianfranco.** “Introduction to Dante’s *Rime*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 318–328.

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**Contini, Gianfranco.** “Philology and Dante Exegesis.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 1–32.

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**Cooksey, Thomas L.** “The Central Man of the World: The Victorian Myth of Dante.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 151–165.

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**Cooper, Richard.** “The French Dimension in Dante’s Politics.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 168–194.

Reprinted from *Dante and Governance*, edited by John Woodhouse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 58–84.

**Cornish, Alison.** “Vulgarizing Science: Vernacular Translation of Natural Philosophy.” In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 169–82.

Analyzes Dante’s attempt to make the practice of natural science more readily accessible to the public by employing the vernacular to convey meteorological descriptions.

**Cornish, Alison.** “Beatrice and the Astronomical Heavens.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 308–317.

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**Cornish, Alison.** “Planets and Angels in *Paradiso* XXIX: The First Moment.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 353–380.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 108 (1990), 1–28.

**Cuzzilla, Tony.** “Par. 32.139: ‘Ma perché ’l tempo fugge che t’assonna.’” *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America*: posted March

15, 2003, at [www.dantesociety.org](http://www.dantesociety.org) > Publications > Electronic Journal (EBDSA).

**Davis, Charles T.** "Dante's Vision of History." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 1–18.

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**Davis, Charles T.** "Remigio de' Girolami and Dante: A Comparison of Their Conceptions of Peace." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 243–274.

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**Davis, Charles.** "Dante and Ecclesiastical Property." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 294–307.

Reprinted from *Law in Mediaeval Life and Thought*, edited by Edward B. King and Susan J. Ridyard (Sewanee, Tennessee: The Press of the University of the South, 1990), pp. 244–257.

**Davis, Charles.** "Rome and Babylon in Dante." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 69–90.

Reprinted from *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth*, edited by P. A. Ramsey. Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies. Binghamton, 1982. Pp. 19–40.

**Di Cesare, Mario A.** "Interrupted Symmetries: *Terza Rima*, Heroic Verse, First Lines, and the Styles of Epic." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 1–33.

Reprinted from *Mediaevalia*, 12 (1989 for 1986), 271–303.

**Donno, Daniel J.** "Dante's Argenti: Episode and Function." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 117–131.

Reprinted from *Speculum*, 40 (1965), 611–625.

**Dronke, Peter.** "Symbolism and Structure in *Paradiso* 30." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 381–400.

Reprinted from *Romance Philology*, 43 (1989), 29–48.

**Durling, Robert M.** "The Body and the Flesh in the *Purgatorio*." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 183–91.

Discusses the important of the distinction between body and flesh with respect to Dante's poetics in the *Purgatorio*, focusing primarily on the terrace of pride. The distinction is vital to an understanding of the representation of souls in *Purgatorio* as "virtual" bodies.

**Durling, Robert M.** "'Io son venuto': Seneca, Plato, and the Microcosm." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 349–383.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 93 (1975), 95–129.

**Williamson, Edward.** "De beatitudine huius vite." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 145–166.

Reprinted from *76th Annual Report of the Dante Society*, 76 (1958), 1–22.

**Ellis, Stephen Paul.** "Yeats and Dante." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 313–329.

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**Ellis, Steve.** "Chaucer, Dante, and Damnation." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 60–72.

Reprinted from *Chaucer Review*, 22 (1988), 282–294.

**Emmerson, Richard K., and Ronald B. Herzman.** "The *Commedia*: Apocalypse, Church, and Dante's Conversion." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 350–401.

Reprinted from *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), pp. 104–144, 203–213.

**Ferrante, Joan M.** "Dante and Politics." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 19–32.

Reprinted from *Dante: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Amilcare A. Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 181–194.

**Ferrante, Joan M.** "Florence and Rome, The Two Cities of Man in *The Divine Comedy*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 275–293.

Reprinted from *The Early Renaissance*, edited by Aldo S. Bernardo. *Acta* [Proceedings of SUNY Regional Conferences in Medieval Studies], Vol. 5 (Binghamton, New York: The Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1978), pp. 1–19.

**Ferrante, Joan M.** "History is Myth, Myth is History." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 33–49.

Reprinted from *Dante. Mito e poesia. Atti del secondo Seminario dantesco internazionale*, edited by Michelangelo Picone and Tatiana Crivelli (Florence: Franco Cesati Editore, 1999), pp. 317–333.

**Ferrante, Joan M.** "The Bible as Thesaurus for Secular Literature." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 233–259.

Reprinted from *The Bible in the Middle Ages: Its Influence on Literature and Art*, edited by Bernard S. Levy (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992), pp. 23–49.

**Ferrante, Joan.** “Dante’s Beatrice, Priest of an Androgynous God.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 187–216.

Reprinted from CEMERS Occasional Publications Series, 2 (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992), pp. 1–32.

**Fosca, Nicola.** “Inferno XIII.99: “. . . come gran di spelta.” *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America*: posted September 27, 2003, at [ww.dantesociety.org](http://ww.dantesociety.org) > Publications > Electronic Journal (EBDSA).

Adverting to previous studies by Hollander and Cassell that link Pier della Vigna to the figure of Judas, the author argues that the image of the “gran di spelta” expresses figurally the degeneration of the Eucharistic “pane,” just as the suicide represents “esattamente l’opposto del sacrificio di Cristo.”

**Foster, Kenelm, O.P.** “The Celebration of Order, *Paradiso* X.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 323–338.

Reprinted from *The Two Dantes and Other Studies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 120–136.

**Foster, Kenelm.** “Religion and Philosophy in Dante.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 113–144.

Reprinted from *The Mind of Dante*, edited by Uberto Limentani. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 47–78.

**Freccero, John.** “Dante’s Pilgrim in a Gyre.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 1250–263.

Reprinted from *PMLA*, 76 (1961), 168–181.

**Freccero, John.** “Dante’s Prologue Scene.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 63–87.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 84 (1966), 1–25.

**Freccero, John.** “Medusa: The Letter and the Spirit.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 355–371.

Reprinted from *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, edited by Rachel Jaffcoff (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 119–135.



**Fussell, Edwin.** "Dante and Pound's *Cantos*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 281–293.

Reprinted from *Journal of Modern Literature*, 1 (1970), 75–87.

**Gilson, Etienne.** "Dante's Notion of a Shade: *Purgatorio* XXV." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 340–358.

Reprinted from *Mediaeval Studies*, 29 (1967), 124–142.

**Gilson, Simon A.** "Dante and the Science of 'Perspective.'" In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 305–339.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 115 (1997), 185–219.

**Gorni, Guglielmo.** "Material Philology, Conjectural Philology, Philology without Adjectives." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 44–55.

Argues that philology constitutes an important science that should not be entrusted to "technicians," but rather to those with an open mind unconstrained by any single critical approach.

**Gragnolati, Manuele.** "From Plurality to (Near) Unicity of Forms: Embryology in *Purgatorio* 25." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 192–210.

Reassessing the longstanding question about the nature of the human soul after the death of the body, Gragnolati argues that Dante's conception is not sufficiently resolved to admit of a definitive answer because he drew on multiple sources, including those of Aquinas and Bonaventure.

**Grayson, Cecil.** "Dante and the Renaissance." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 73–91.

Reprinted from *Italian Studies Presented to E.R. Vincent*, edited by C.P. Brand et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 57–75.

**Grayson, Cecil.** "Dante's Theory and Practice of Poetry." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 2–21.

Reprinted from *The World of Dante: Essays on Dante and his Times*, edited by Cecil Grayson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 146–165.

**Greene, Thomas M.** "Dramas of Selfhood in the *Comedy*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 1–34.

Reprinted from *From Time to Eternity*, edited by Thomas G. Bergin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 103–136.

**Harrison, Robert Pogue.** "Comedy and Modernity: Dante's Hell." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 221–239.

Reprinted from *MLN*, 102: 5 (1987), 1043–1061.

**Harrison, Robert Pogue.** “Vision and Revision: The Provisionary Essence of the *Vita Nuova*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 174–185.

Reprinted from *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 32: 1 (1990), 6–17.

**Hawkins, Peter S., and Rachel Jacoff.** “Still Here: Dante after Modernism.” In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 451–64.

The authors trace the influence of Dante on twentieth-century poets, focusing on the remarks of T.S. Eliot, Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, Charles Wright, and Gjertrud Schnackenberg, among others.

**Hawkins, Peter.** “Divide and Conquer: Augustine in the *Commedia*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 343–354.

Reprinted from *PMLA*, 106, 3 (1991), 471–482.

**Herzman, Ronald.** “From Francis to Solomon: Eschatology in the Sun.” In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 320–33.

Argues that Dante depicts Francis of Assisi’s life in the *Commedia* because the saint served as a model for Dante’s himself, as an example of humility. In this light he conducts a reading of the saint’s pseudo-presence in the Heaven of the Sun (*Par.* 10) together with that of Solomon’s real presence.

**Herzman, Ronald B.** “Cannibalism and Communion in *Inferno* XX–XIII.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 175–200.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 98 (1980), 53–78.

**Herzman, Ronald B.** “Dante and the Apocalypse.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 402–417.

Reprinted from *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, edited by Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca, New York, and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 398–413.

**Herzman, Ronald.** “Dante and Francis.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 386–404.

Reprinted from *Franciscan Studies*, 42: 20 (1982), 96–114.

**Hipolito, T.A.** “The Ancient and the Modern in Dante’s *Vita Nuova*.” *Renascence*, 55: 2 (2003), 111–32.

Although as a “quintessentially medieval work” the *Vita Nuova* can appear somewhat unsettling to a modern temperament for its comparison of Beatrice with Christ, Dante’s concept of love nevertheless reflects the general elevation of religious love over secular love in the Middle Ages. At the same time, however, the author claims that Dante’s work is intensely modern in the way in which Dante represents self-consciousness and expounds a theory of literature.

**Hollander, Robert** and **Heather Russo**. “*Purgatorio* 33.43: Dante’s 515 and Virgil’s 333.” *Electronic Bulletin of the Dante Society of America*: posted March 27, 2003, at [www.dantesociety.org](http://www.dantesociety.org) > Publications > Electronic Journal (EBDSA).

**Hollander, Robert**. “Tragedy in Dante’s *Comedy*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 34–54.

Reprinted from *Sewanee Review*, 91: 2 (1983), 240–260.

**Hollander, Robert** and **Albert L. Rossi**. “Dante’s Republican Treasury.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 363–386.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 104 (1986), 59–82.

**Hollander, Robert**. “Baranski’s Article (1991).” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 6: 225–245.

Reprinted from *Dante’s Epistle to Cangrande* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 75–95.

**Hollander, Robert**. “Dante’s Use of *Aeneid* I in *Inferno* I and II.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 56–77.

Reprinted from *Comparative Literature*, 20 (1968), 142–156.

**Iannucci, Amilcare A.** “Already and Not Yet: Dante’s Existential Eschatology.” In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 334–48.

Contends that the magnitude of the calamities atop the mountain of Purgatory serialized in *Purgatorio* 28–33 suggests Dante must have believed that the end of time was near.

**Iannucci, Amilcare**, “Beatrice in Limbo: a Metaphoric Harrowing of Hell.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 255–277.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 97 (1979), 23–45.

**Jacoff, Rachel**. “Our Bodies, Our Selves”: The Body in the *Commedia*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 359–377.

Reprinted from *Sparks and Seeds: Medieval Literature and its Afterlife. Essays in Honor of John Freccero*, edited by Dana E. Stewart and Alison Cornish. Binghamton Medieval and Early Modern Studies, 2 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), pp. 119–137.

**Kaske, Robert E.** “Dante’s *Purgatorio* XXXII and XXXIII: A Survey of Christian History.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 309–330.

Reprinted from *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 43 (1974), 193–214.

**Kay, Richard.** “Unwintering January (Dante, *Paradiso* 27.142–143).” *MLN*, 118 (2003), 237–44.

Undertakes to debunk the commonly held interpretation of the “unwintering” of January mentioned in *Paradiso* by arguing that the apparently obscure aspect of the prophecy in fact relates to particular aspects of the Julian calendar and other astrological and astronomical signs. According to Kay’s hypothesis, Dante understands that January would be a spring month based on the precession of the equinoxes, not on the tropical and solar year as described in the Julian calendar.

**Kay, Richard.** “Dante’s Empyrean and the Eye of God.” *Speculum*, 78 (2003), 37–65.

Contents that the Empyrean is in fact an image of God’s Eye. To establish this comparison Dante needed to subscribe to and make use of the extramission theory of vision that bases sight on rays coming out of rather than into the eye, because God’s Eye was not otherwise available to him as an iconic image.

**Kirkham, Victoria.** “A Canon of Women in Dante’s *Commedia*.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 36–61.

Reprinted from *Annali d’Italianistica*, 7 (1989), 16–41.

**Kleinhenz, Christopher.** “On Dante and the Visual Arts.” In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 274–92.

Relates Dante’s desire for narrative to be understood both horizontally and vertically to his study of visual representations, specifically those of mosaics of the Florentine Baptistery.

**Kleinhenz, Christopher.** “Dante’s Towering Giants: *Inferno* XXXI.” In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 157–173.

Reprinted from *Romance Philology*, 27 (1974), 269–285.

**Kleinhenz, Christopher.** "The Poetics of Citation: Dante's *Divina Commedia* and the Bible." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 301–321.

Reprinted from *Italiana* 1988 (1990), pp. 1–21.

**Lansing, Richard.** "Dante's Concept of Violence and the Chain of Being." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 143–163.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 99 (1981), 67–88.

**Lansing, Richard.** "Dante's Intended Audience in the *Convivio*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 27–34.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 110 (1992), 17–24.

**Lansing, Richard.** "Narrative Design in Dante's Earthly Paradise." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 293–305.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 112 (1994), 101–113.

**Lansing, Richard.** "Piccarda and the Poetics of Paradox: A Reading of *Paradiso* III." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 307–322.

Reprinted from *Dante Studies*, 105 (1987), 63–77.

**Leo, Ulrich.** "The Unfinished *Convivio* and Dante's Rereading of the *Aeneid*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 189–212.

Reprinted from *Medieval Studies*, 13 (1951), 44–64.

**Levenstein, Jessica.** "The Re-Formation of Marsyas in *Paradiso* 1." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 408–21.

Concentrates on a celebrated aspect of Ovid's influence on Dante's work, the episode of Marsyas in the sixth book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, finding that Dante presents a re-imagining of Ovid's scene in the first canto of *Paradiso*.

**Macdonald, Ronald.** "Dante: Language and History." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 2: 127–188.

Reprinted from *Places of Memory: Epic Underworlds in Vergil, Dante, and Milton* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), pp. 57–87.

**Martinez, Ronald L.** "Dante's Jeremiads: The Fall of Jerusalem and the Burden of the New Pharisees, the Capetians, and Florence." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 301–19.

Compares Florence with Jerusalem as cities destined for a kind of divine destruction, providing an analysis of a number of cantos that reinforce this idea, in particular *Inferno* 19 and 23, and *Purgatorio* 20 and 23.

**Martinez, Ronald.** "Mourning Beatrice: The Rhetoric of Threnody in the *Vita Nuova*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 127–155.

Reprinted from *Modern Language Notes*, 113: 1 (1998), 1–29.

**Mazzeo, J. A.** "Dante's Conception of Poetic Expression." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 117–134.

Reprinted from *Romanic Review*, 47 (1956), 241–258.

**Mazzeo, J. A.** "Light Metaphysics, Dante's *Convivio* and the Letter to Can Grande della Scala." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 3: 265–303.

Reprinted from *Traditio*, 14 (1958), 191–229.

**Mazzotta, Giuseppe.** "The Heaven of the Sun: Dante between Aquinas and Bonaventure." In *Dante for the New Millennium* (q.v.), 152–68.

Addresses Dante's focus on doctrinal controversies in the Sphere of the Sun, tracing Dante's treatment of philosophical and theological concepts in this area to Saints Bonaventure and Aquinas, the two figures to whom he most substantially owes his understanding of Christian spirituality and doctrine.

**Mazzotta, Giuseppe.** "Dante's Literary Typology." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 4: 177–195.

Reprinted from *MLN*, 87: 1 (1972), 1–19.

**Mazzotta, Giuseppe.** "Opus restaurationis." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 5: 92–143.

Reprinted from *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the "Divine Comedy"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 14–65.

**Mazzotta, Giuseppe.** "Poetics of History: *Inferno* XXVI." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 7: 149–156.

Reprinted from *Diacritics*, 2 (1975), 37–44.

**Mazzotta, Giuseppe.** "The Language of Poetry in the *Vita Nuova*." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 1: 93–104.

Reprinted from *Rivista di studi italiani*, 1: 1 (1983), 3–14.

**McDougal, Stuart Y.** "T. S. Eliot's Metaphysical Dante." In *Dante: The Critical Complex* (q.v.), 8: 375–399.

Reprinted from *Dante among the Moderns*, edited by Stuart Y. McDougal (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 57–81.

**Merrill, James.** “Divine Poem.” In *Dante Alighieri (q.v.)*, 73–80.

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G. Neal McTighe, Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
William John Meegan,\* Syracuse, New York  
Giorgio Melloni, New Paltz, New York  
Maria Rosa Menocal, New York, New York  
Ellen Mickiewicz, Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
Alan W. Miller, New York, New York  
James V. Mirollo, New York, New York  
Christian R. Moevs, South Bend, Indiana  
Julius A. Molinaro,\* Toronto, Canada  
Vittorio Montemaggi, Cambridge, England  
John W. Moore, University Park, Pennsylvania  
Anthony J. Morandi, Billerica, Massachusetts  
Leslie Z. Morgan, Baltimore, Maryland  
Molly Morrison, Athens, Ohio  
Richard Morton, Hamilton, Canada  
John M. Mosedale, New York, New York



Stefano Mula, Middlebury, Vermont  
Matt Murphy, Lockport, New York  
Daniel Murtaugh, Delray Beach, Florida  
Kristen Murtaugh, Delray Beach, Florida  
Salvatore D.S. Musumeci, Brighton, England  
Eugene Paul Nassar, Utica, New York  
Howard Needler, New Haven, Connecticut  
Thomas R. Nevin,\* University Heights, Ohio  
Susan J. Noakes, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Joan Nordell, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Cormac O Cuilleánáin, Dublin, Ireland  
Anthony J. Oldcorn, Wellesley, Massachusetts  
Kristina Olson, Winston-Salem, North Carolina  
Philip F. O'Mara,\* Bridgewater, Virginia  
Paul Oppenheimer, New York, New York  
Lydia Oram, New York, New York  
Frank Ordiway,\*\* Princeton, New Jersey  
Pina Palma, Woodbridge, Connecticut  
Paul J. Papillo, Dobbs Ferry, New York  
Michael Papio, Amherst, Massachusetts  
Samuele F.S. Pardini, Buffalo, New York  
Thomas Parisi, South Bend, Indiana  
Dabney Park, Jr., Coral Gables, Florida  
Francesca Parmeggiani, Bronx, New York  
Joseph Pasquariello, Staten Island, New York  
Maria C. Passaro, Armonk, New York  
Joy Patterson, Melbourne, Florida  
Gordon Patterson, Melbourne, Florida  
Rodney J. Payton, Bellingham, Washington  
Matthew Pearl, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Anthony L. Pellegrini,\* Vestal, New York  
Robert Frank Pence,\*\* Washington, District of Columbia  
Joseph Pequigney, New York, New York  
Nicolas J. Perella,\* Berkeley, California  
Lino Pertile,\* Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Larry Peterman, Davis, California  
Jennifer Petrie,\* Dublin, Ireland  
George Peyton,\* London, Ohio

Richard B. Payer, Hackensack, New Jersey  
Mario P. Pietralunga, Sacramento, California  
Gabriel Pihas, Berlin, Germany  
Robert V. Piluso, Ardsley, New York  
Daniel Pinti, Niagara University, New York  
Anna Piperato, Manchester, England  
Elizabeth W. Poe, New Orleans, Louisiana  
Tamara L. Pollack, Bloomington, Indiana  
Vincent Pollina, Medford, Massachusetts  
Gabrielle E. Popoff, New York, New York  
Ronald Prater, Brasília, Brazil  
Plinio Prioreschi, Omaha, Nebraska  
Lucio Angelo Privitello, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Joe Frederick Privitera, Columbia, Maryland  
F. Regina Psaki,\* Eugene, Oregon  
Ricardo J. Quinones,\* Los Angeles, California  
Guy P. Raffa, Austin, Texas  
Dawn Randall, Wayland, Massachusetts  
Robert Randall, Wayland, Massachusetts  
Luciano Rebay, New York, New York  
Brian Regan, Sacramento, California  
Joshua Reid, Lexington, Kentucky  
Mary T. Reynolds,\* Washington, District of Columbia  
Patricia Lyn Richards, Gambier, Ohio  
Anthony Roda, Oneonta, New York  
Maria Roglieri, Sleepy Hollow, New York  
Roy Rosenstein, Paris, France  
Claudia Rossignoli, St. Andrews, Scotland  
Sherry Roush, State College, Pennsylvania  
Claude A. Ruffalo, Topanga, California  
Carol S. Rupprecht, Clinton, New York  
Charles C. Russell, Kensington, Maryland  
Lawrence V. Ryan, Stanford, California  
Arielle Saiber, Brunswick, Maine  
Eve Salisbury, Kalamazoo, Michigan  
Anne T. Sampson, Bloomington, Indiana  
Mark Sandona, Frederick, Maryland  
Federico Sanguineti,\* Fisciano (Salerno), Italy

Giacomo Scarato,\* Paterson, New Jersey  
Brenda Deen Schildgen, Berkeley, California  
Jeffrey T. Schnapp, Stanford, California  
Richard J. Schoeck,\* Lawrence, Kansas  
Anne M. Schuchman, Rutherford, New Jersey  
Frank Sciulli, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Karl-Ludwig Selig, New York, New York  
Judith Serafini-Sauli, Bronxville, New York  
Tip H. Shanklin, Columbia, Kentucky  
Laurie Shepard, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts  
Michael Sherberg, St. Louis, Missouri  
Judith Patricia Shoaf, Gainesville, Florida  
Richard A. Shoaf, Gainesville, Florida  
Leah Angell Sievers, Los Angeles, California  
William Singletary, Wynnewood, Pennsylvania  
Mary Sisler, Upper Montclair, New Jersey  
Carole Slade, New York, New York  
Janet L. Smarr,\* La Jolla, California  
Kelly A. Smith, Orange, California  
Lee Daniel Snyder, Sarasota, Florida  
Madison U. Sowell,\* Provo, Utah  
L. Eugene Startzman, Berea, Kentucky  
Elizabeth Statmore,\* San Francisco, California  
Glenn A. Steinberg, Ewing, New Jersey  
William A. Stephany, Burlington, Vermont  
Robert G. Stern, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts  
Susan Stewart, Princeton, New Jersey  
Dana Stewart, Binghamton, New York  
Eleonora Stoppino, Hanover, New Hampshire  
H. Wayne Storey, Bloomington, Indiana  
Sara Sturm-Maddox, Amherst, Massachusetts  
Kiyoshi Tani, Kanagawa, Japan  
James Tetreault, New York, New York  
James Torrens, S.J., Los Angeles, California  
Tonia Triggiano, River Forest, Illinois  
Teresa A. Trimarco, Brooklyn, New York  
Mario Trovato, Evanston, Illinois  
Alan S. Trueblood,\* Little Compton, Rhode Island

Rosine Turner,\* Madison, Wisconsin  
Diane D. Vacca, New York, New York  
Dianne Vagnini, Decatur, Georgia  
Charles J. Vallely, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts  
Kevin P. Van Anglen, Bedford, New Hampshire  
Camille Vapi,\* Norwood, Massachusetts  
Massimo Verdicchio, Edmonton, Canada  
Kathleen Verduin, Holland, Michigan  
Nancy J. Vickers,\*\* Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania  
Catherine G. Vignale, Holmdel, New Jersey  
Anthony Viscusi,\*\* New York, New York  
Gianfranco Vitale, East Haddam, Connecticut  
David Wallace,\* Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Gary Waller, Purchase, New York  
Elizabeth Walsh, San Diego, California  
Robert Carroll Walters,\* Worcester, Massachusetts  
Lawrence Warner,\* Adelaide, Australia  
Mary Watt, Gainesville, Florida  
Heather Webb, Columbus, Ohio  
Robert M. Weiner, Brookline, Massachusetts  
Elizabeth B. Welles, Bethesda, Maryland  
Thomas Werge, Notre Dame, Indiana  
Kathryn G. Werling, Columbus, Ohio  
Rebecca West, Chicago, Illinois  
Scott Westrem, New York, New York  
Winthrop Wetherbee, Ithaca, New York  
Max A. Wickert, Buffalo, New York  
Daniel R. Winterich, Sylvania, Ohio  
Chauncey Wood, Simcoe, Canada  
Constance S. Wright, Carmel, California  
Whit Yost, Norristown, Pennsylvania  
Seth Zimmerman, Oakland, California  
Jan Ziolkowski,\* Cambridge, Massachusetts

## The Dante Prize and the Charles Hall Grandgent Award

Since 1887 the Dante Society of America has offered an annual prize for the best student essay on a subject related to the life or works of Dante. The Dante Prize of two hundred and fifty dollars is offered for the best essay submitted by an undergraduate in any American or Canadian college or university, or by anyone not enrolled as a graduate student who has received the degree of A.B. or its equivalent within the past year. In addition, a prize of five hundred dollars, the Charles Hall Grandgent Award, is offered for the best essay submitted by an American or Canadian student enrolled in any graduate program.

All submissions must be sent as e-mail attachments to the Dante Society at [dsa@dantesociety.org](mailto:dsa@dantesociety.org). Undergraduate essays should be no longer than 5,000 words and graduate essays no longer than 7,000 words. The deadline for submission is June 30.

Each writer should provide a cover page (as the first page of the file) giving the writer's name, local, permanent and e-mail addresses, the title of the essay, the essay category, and the writer's institutional affiliation. The writer's name should not appear on the essay title page (to follow the cover page) or on any other page of the essay since the essays are submitted anonymously to the readers. Quotations from Dante's works should be cited in the original language, and the format of an essay should conform to either the Chicago or MLA Style Sheet guidelines.

Submissions will be judged by a special Committee of the Society. If it should be decided that none of the essays submitted deserves a full prize, the Society may award one prize to two contestants, each to receive one half of the prize, or it may make no award. The results will be announced in early autumn and published in the fall issue of the Society's *Newsletter* and in *Dante Studies*. While the essays remain the intellectual property of the writers, the submitted text will not be returned to authors.

## Report of the Secretary

The 122nd annual meeting of the Dante Society (and the 49th of the incorporated Dante Society of America) was held at the Carriage House of the Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Sunday, May 9, 2004. President **Giuseppe Mazzotta** called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. President Mazzotta introduced **Jim Shea**, the Manager of the Longfellow National Historic Site, and Mr. Shea offered a few words of welcome to our group.

After the business meeting, **Giuseppe Mazzotta** introduced **Peter S. Hawkins** of Boston University, **Guy P. Raffa** of the University of Texas at Austin, and **Brenda Deen Schildgen** of the University of California at Davis, who discussed their recent books on Dante.

The balloting in the spring of 2004 resulted in the election of **Simon Gilson** and **Jan Ziolkowski** to the Council for a term of three years and re-election of **Todd Boli** as Secretary-Treasurer for a term of one year. In the summer, **Nancy Vickers** was re-elected Vice-President for the year 2004–2005.

In the prize competition for 2004, the Dante Prize for the best undergraduate essay was awarded to **Benjamin F. Johnson** of Brigham Young University, and the Grandgent Award for the best essay by a graduate student was awarded to **Robert Di Pede** of Seton Hall University. **Alessandro Vettori** (chair) and **Brenda Schildgen** served as Prize Committee judges.

The Dante Society met in conjunction with the MLA Convention in Philadelphia on Tuesday, December 28, 2004. **Giuseppe Mazzotta** introduced **Wai Chee Dimock** of Yale University, who spoke on the topic “Planetary Dante.”

The Society sponsored three sessions on Dante at the Thirty-Ninth International Congress on Medieval Studies, held at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 6–9, 2004:

Dante I: Perspectives on *Paradiso*, **Christopher Kleinhenz** (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Chair. **Christian Moevs** (University of Notre Dame): “‘Il Punto’: Incarnation and Self-Knowledge in Dante’s *Commedia*.” **Federica Anichini** (Smith College): “Grammar and Ethics in *Paradiso* III.” **Diego Fasolini** (Gettysburg College): “The Theological Necessity of an Objective Form of Revelation: An Interpretation of the Dantean Light in *Paradiso* XXXIII.”

Dante II: From Hell to Heaven, **Nicholas R. Havely** (University of York), Chair. **Caron Ann Cioffi** (Independent Scholar): "'La porta del futuro': Anti-christ and the Apocalyptic Allegory of *Inferno* IX and X." **Grace C. Chan** (University of Illinois): "The Poetics of Ascent: Dante and the Tropology of Mystical Ascent in the *Paradiso*." **Marsha Daigle-Williamson** (Spring Arbor University): "'I Am Not Paul, But Then Again, I Am Paul': Dante's Pilgrim in the *Paradiso*."

Dante III: Dante and His Readers, Medieval and Modern, **Richard Lansing** (Brandeis University), Chair. **Nicholas R. Havely** (University of York): "Dante at Cambridge: A Fourteenth-Century Franciscan Reader of the *Commedia*." **Laurie Shepard** (Boston College): "Dante's Commentators and the Ecclesiological Vision of Pietro Giovanni d'Olivi." **Cosetta Gaudenzi** (University of Memphis): "Dante in the United States: The Beginnings as Retold in Matthew Pearl's *The Dante Club*."

